

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

HELENE C. MONBERG



STATUS OF INTERVIEW:
OPEN FOR RESEARCH



Interview Conducted, Edited, and Desktop Published by:
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Senior Historian
Bureau of Reclamation



Interview conducted–1994
Interview edited and published–2013

Oral History Program
Bureau of Reclamation
Denver, Colorado

SUGGESTED CITATION:

MONBERG, HELENE C. ORAL HISTORY

INTERVIEW. Transcript of tape-recorded Bureau of Reclamation oral history interview conducted by Brit Allan Storey, senior historian, Bureau of Reclamation, in Washington, D.C.. Edited by Brit Allan Storey. Repository for the record copy of the transcript is the National Archives and Records Administration in College Park, Maryland, or in the regional office in the Denver, Colorado, area.

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**STATEMENT OF DONATION
OF ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW OF
HELENE C. MONBERG**

1. In accordance with the provisions of Chapter 21 of Title 44, United States Code, and subject to the terms, conditions, and restrictions set forth in this instrument, I, Helene C. Monberg, (hereinafter referred to as "the Donor"), of 123 Sixth Street, SE, Washington, D.C., do hereby give, donate, and convey to the National Archives and Records Administration (hereinafter referred to as "the National Archives"), acting for and on behalf of the United States of America, all of my rights and title to, and interest in the information and responses (hereinafter referred to as "the Donated Materials") provided during the interview conducted on August 10, 1994, at my home in Washington, D.C., and prepared for deposit with the National Archives and Records Administration in the following format: cassette tape recordings and transcripts. This donation includes, but is not limited to, all copyright interests I now possess in the Donated Materials.
2. Title to the Donated Materials remains with the Donor until acceptance of the Donated Materials by the Archivist of the United States. The Archivist shall accept by signing below.
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 - a. It is the intention of the Archivist to make Donated Materials available for display and research as soon as possible, and the Donor places no restrictions upon their use.
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5. The Archivist may dispose of Donated Materials at any time after title passes to the National Archives.

Date: August 10, 1994

Signed: Helene C. Monberg
HELENE C. MONBERG

INTERVIEWER: _____
Brit Allan Storey, Senior Historian, Bureau of Reclamation

Having determined that the materials donated above by Helene C. Monberg are appropriate for preservation as evidence of the United States Government's organization, functions, policies, decisions, procedures, and transactions, and considering it to be in the public interest to accept these materials for deposit with the National Archives and Records Administration, I accept this gift on behalf of the United States of America, subject to the terms, conditions, and restrictions set forth in the above instrument.

Date: 8-10-94

Signed: _____
Archivist of the United States

Introduction

In 1988, Reclamation began to create a history program. While headquartered in Denver, the history program was developed as a bureau-wide program.

One component of Reclamation's history program is its oral history activity. The primary objectives of Reclamation's oral history activities are: preservation of historical data not normally available through Reclamation records (supplementing already available data on the whole range of Reclamation's history); making the preserved data available to researchers inside and outside Reclamation.

A note on the nature of oral histories is in order for readers and researchers who have not worked with oral histories in the past. We attempt to process Reclamation's oral histories so that speech patterns and verbiage are preserved. Speech and formal written text vary greatly in most individuals, and we do not attempt to turn Reclamation's oral histories into polished formal discourse. Rather, the objective during editing of interviews is to convey the information as it was spoken during the interview. However, editorial changes often are made to clarify or expand meaning, and those are shown in the text.

The senior historian of the Bureau of Reclamation developed and directs the oral history program. Questions, comments, and suggestions may be addressed to the senior historian.

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Oral history of Helene C. Monberg

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For additional information about Reclamation's
history program see:
www.usbr.gov/history

Oral History Interview

Storey: This is Brit Allan Storey, senior historian of the Bureau of Reclamation, interviewing Helene Monberg¹ at her home at 123 Sixth Street, Southeast, in Washington, D.C., on August the 10th, 1994, at about nine o'clock in the morning. This is tape one.

Ms. Monberg, would you tell me where you were born and raised and educated?

Born in Leadville, Colorado, in 1918 and Graduated from Leadville High School in 1936

Monberg: First of all, my name is Helene. I was born October 19th, 1918, in Leadville, Colorado. I graduated from Leadville High School in 1936.

Studied Journalism at the University of Colorado on a Four Year Scholarship, Graduating in 1940

I got a scholarship to the University of Colorado, a four-year scholarship, which I had to maintain. I had to be in the upper one-fourth of my class each quarter, which I was, and I graduated from college in 1940, from the University of Colorado.

Storey: In what field?

1. There is also a brief oral history interview at http://www.capitolhillhistory.org/interviews/2003/monberg_helene.pdf. The information is largely devoted to her life on Capitol Hill in Washington, D.C. The website was accessed May 7, 2013, at about 2:50 P.M.

Monberg: Journalism.

Storey: What did your family do in Leadville?

Monberg: My mother was a homebody until we grew up, and then she had a little business at home. My father, for *many, many* years, had the Mutual Life of New York Insurance Agency in Leadville. He had Box 1, Leadville, Colorado.

Storey: At the Post Office?

Monberg: Post Office Box 1, Leadville, Colorado. That meant Mutual Life of New York—MUNY.

Storey: And what was the business your mother started?

Monberg: My mother, after Hank and I—my sister and I—graduated from college, she started a little beauty shop at home. Hank graduated in 1942. She probably did that—she died in 1947—she probably did that for three or four years. Daddy was so proud of her. She had been a teacher before she was married. She had this little beauty shop. Of course, he helped her get started. She enjoyed it. Everybody in town knew both of them, and she was very convivial. So was my dad. I'm the kind that wants to be alone. Not they, they were very convivial with the people at home. They loved them and they should have.

Storey: What did you do when you graduated?

Went to Work for the *Salida Record*

Monberg: I got a job first in *Salida Record*, in Salida, Colorado. And I worked there until the fall, and I've forgotten what happened, but there was some kind of a falling-out between—I've been trying to think about this, what just exactly what did happen so long ago, between the guy who ran it and myself. Anyway, in any event, it was a mutual agreement that I was not going to stay.

Worked Briefly for the *Record* in Leadville and Then Worked for the *Raton Daily Range* in Raton, New Mexico, until March of 1941

And I came home and worked on the weekly paper, the *Record* in Leadville, for about maybe a month, six weeks. Then I got a job with the *Raton Daily Range*, in Raton, New Mexico. God, I loved the people down there. They were absolutely great. I worked there until March of 1941. That was nine months after I graduated from C-U.²

2. A note on editorial conventions. In the text of these interviews, information in parentheses, (), is actually on the tape. Information in brackets, [], has been added to the tape either by the editor to clarify meaning or at the request of the interviewee in order to correct, enlarge, or clarify the interview as it was originally spoken. Words have sometimes been struck out by editor or interviewee in order to clarify meaning or eliminate repetition. In the case of strikeouts, that material has been printed at 50% density to aid in reading the interviews but assuring that the struckout material is readable.

The transcriber and editor also have removed some extraneous words such as false starts and repetitions without indicating their removal. The meaning of the interview has not been changed by this

(continued...)

Became the First Woman on the Editorial Staff of *Pathfinder Magazine*

Then I had advertised in *Editor and Publisher*, and I got an offer to become the first woman on the editorial staff of *Pathfinder Magazine*, which was a weekly news publication that went primarily to rural people. And when they saw my ad in *E-&-P*, they thought that this was the *Raton Range* was in real farm country. It wasn't real farm country, and I had never really been from real farm country, because Leadville, God knows, is not farm country. But, in event, I got the job. A Norwegian by the name of Helge Nygren published it, and he was quite a character. Any event, I worked for *Pathfinder* for a year.

Worked Briefly for the Army

2. (...continued)
editing.

In an effort to conform to standard academic rules of usage (see *The Chicago Manual of Style*), individual's titles are only capitalized in the text when they are specifically used as a title connected to a name, e.g., "Secretary of the Interior Gale Norton" as opposed to "Gale Norton, the secretary of the interior;" or "Commissioner John Keys" as opposed to "the commissioner, who was John Keys at the time." Likewise formal titles of acts and offices are capitalized but abbreviated usages are not, e.g., Division of Planning as opposed to "planning;" the Reclamation Projects Authorization and Adjustment Act of 1992, as opposed to "the 1992 act."

The convention with acronyms is that if they are pronounced as a word then they are treated as if they are a word. If they are spelled out by the speaker then they have a hyphen between each letter. An example is the Agency for International Development's acronym: said as a word, it appears as AID but spelled out it appears as A-I-D; another example is the acronym for State Historic Preservation Officer: SHPO when said as a word, but S-H-P-O when spelled out.

Bureau of Reclamation History Program

And then I went down and, of course, I was, as usual, running all over, collecting news. And I somehow or other got involved with the Army. I'm not exactly sure how; I assume because of the beginning of the Second World War. Any event, the Army was starting something which was called "The Women's Interest Section." The Army was just discovering women, and so they needed women to interpret it to them or some damn thing, I'm not sure what the hell it was. But in any event, I got the job. And I never figured out what it was about. I worked for them for ten weeks—quit.

Went to the Congressional Staff of the United Press

About the same time, I was offered a job on the congressional staff of United Press [UP]. Of course, they had just never had women before. That was just one hell of an opportunity, *great* opportunity.

“ . . . I did that for about two or three years, and then I was assigned down at the agencies downtown, which turned out to be *extremely important* to me, because one of the agencies I covered was the Interior Department . . . ”

And I did that for about two or three years, and then I was assigned down at the agencies downtown, which turned out to be *extremely important* to me, because one of the agencies I covered was the Interior Department, and

there is no better way to learn the Interior Department, or any agency, than to be assigned by a wire service, and you have to keep your eye on it all the time. I *really* know the Interior Department. That was when I first came in contact with the Bureau of Reclamation, and that job at U-P lasted for five years.

Storey: Well, now, you had moved to Washington with *Pathfinder* magazine, had you?

**“ . . . I moved to Washington with *Pathfinder*. . . .
right, from Raton, New Mexico. . . .”**

Monberg: Sure, I moved to Washington with *Pathfinder*.
(Storey: Oh, okay.) Yeah, right, from Raton,
New Mexico.

**“In the fall of 1947 . . . U-P canned its women. . . .
So I went home and thought it over and decided
that I would go into business for myself. It was
the best decision I ever made . . .”**

In the fall of 1947, this was after the war was over and everybody was getting back into civilian life, U-P canned its women. I was so stupid that I didn't know that I was supposed to bitch about it. I figured, "What the hell? Men who'd put their lives on the line. I hadn't had to go in the service," and this was the way it was. So I went home and thought it over and decided that I would go into business for myself. It was the best decision I ever made, *without a doubt*. I went down to Pueblo . . .

Storey: Excuse me, when you say you went home—to Leadville?

Began to Line up Newspapers for Her News Service in Washington, D.C.

Monberg: Okay. And I talked to Frank Hoag Jr. Excuse me, I may have talked to Frank Hoag Sr. I may have talked to Frank Hoag, Sr.

There Was a Lot of Interest in a Potential Reclamation Project Called the Fryingpan-Arkansas Project

In any event, the Fryingpan-Arkansas was being—a Reclamation project—was being very much discussed at that point, down in Pueblo and the Lower Arkansas Valley. So far as Colorado is concerned, it's not Lower Arkansas generally, but so far as Colorado is concerned, southern Colorado. The idea was to finish the crops for the farmers in the Lower Arkansas Valley, in the La Junta area, in that area.

Storey: Rocky Ford.

Monberg: Right. So I talked to him about—first Frank Sr., who was just at the point of retiring, and Frank Jr., about their having a Washington connection, and they were very much interested for only one reason. They didn't give a damn about anything else. They were interested in Fryingpan. This would stabilize the economy of southern Colorado, not so much Pueblo, because in those days the CF&I

was a big employer in Pueblo, but it would stabilize the economy in southern Colorado.

And they were very close to Damon Dussi [phonetic], who was a ramrod of the Fryingpan Project, and Charlie Boustead, who was likewise. So that is where I started writing about Bureau of Reclamation projects. It turned out to be a very interesting assignment. And this was in 1947, and I worked for the Pueblo papers doing all kinds of writing, not just about Fryingpan, although, of course, I *always* kept my eye on Fryingpan, until the end of 1983.

“At the end of 1983, I was eligible for Social Security . . . and I decided to just continue my *Western Resources Wrap-Up* newsletter, which I had started in 1965 to extend to more length, stories which I ran across . . . of course, I lined up subscribers . . .”

At the end of 1983, I was eligible for Social Security at that point, and I decided to just continue my *Western Resources Wrap-Up* newsletter, which I had started in 1965 to extend to more length, stories which I ran across, which you couldn't do in a two-page news story. In doing so, of course, I lined up subscribers which were non-news subscribers as well as news subscribers, and that continued.

“I was one of the first women ever to have her own news bureau. I was one of the first women ever to have her own newsletter. . . .”

I was one of the first women ever to have her own news bureau. I was one of the first women ever to have her own newsletter.

Published *Western Resources Wrap-Up* from 1965 until 1994

That I continued until after the problem I had with my leg, my left leg, and just general exhaustion. That terminated *Wrap-Up* late in June of this year, but it was published for close to thirty years.

“ . . . it was centered on all Western resources, not simply water. . . . I would rather write a power story than any other story. . . . ”

And it was centered on all Western resources, not simply water. I wrote more about water than anything else, because there are more water organizations than others, but I wrote about public land, I wrote about energy, and I wrote about Indians. I wrote about anything that was particularly interesting to the West in the resources field. As a matter of fact, I would rather write a power story than any other story. Power fascinates me.

**Reporting on the Fryingpan-Arkansas Project
Taught Her to Maintain Connections with
Colorado Members of Congress**

That brings us up to date. I do want to mention a couple of things about Fryingpan, and that is that with Fryingpan I learned to

have connections on the [Capitol] Hill relative to my own delegation, which turned out to be very interesting.

Judge J. Edgar Chenoweth

Judge J. Edgar Chenoweth, he was a congressman from Colorado from the Third District, he was in the House. He was a real nice guy. He was not very effective, but he tended to keep Fryingpan front and center where he had to, which was in the House Interior Committee, and to some extent along those early years, appropriations didn't make that much difference, until it got over to the Senate.

Senators Eugene Milliken and Edwin Johnson

When it got to the Senate, that was where the action took place, because Senator Eugene D. Milliken was the ranking Republican of the Senate Interior Committee, and Senator Edwin C. Johnson, who everybody called "Big Ed," was the chairman of the Senate Commerce Committee. These two worked together in a bipartisan way, so far as Colorado was concerned, very effectively, and they really liked each other. There wasn't the kind of partisanship that we're seeing today in so many of the delegations. They *really* cared about Colorado. They really cared about the country, and they kept partisanship down to a

minimum. And they moved the project along until it was authorized, finally, in 1968.³

Member of Congress Wayne Aspinall

In the House, the person who was most influential in anything happening to Fryingpan was chairman Wayne N. Aspinall, of the House Interior Committee. He didn't give a damn about Fryingpan. He was very concerned about all kinds of diversion, and rightly so, in my opinion. He was a congressman from—my recollection he was—I know he was from the western slope. It seems to me he was from Paonia,⁴ but I'm not absolutely sure about that. But in any event, he was very much interested in the Upper Colorado Project. And in order to get Upper Colorado, he had to take a look at Fryingpan.

Wayne Aspinall Worked Closely with Ival Goslin, the Executive Director of the Upper Colorado River Commission

He worked very closely with a man named Ival Goslin, who was executive director of the Upper Colorado River Commission. And these two got along famously. Aspinall was a very able, shrewd, good legislator, who, like particularly Milliken, engendered a lot of respect among his colleagues in the House. Ival was pretty much Wayne Aspinall's arms and legs, his *ears* and legs.

3. The president signed the act authorizing the project in 1962.

4. Congressman Wayne Aspinall was from Palisade, Colorado.

Ival used to tell Aspinall what was going on out in their neck of the woods, and he would do it honestly, with great deference, however, to coach the chairman. Aspinall listened intently, and Aspinall knew the terrain and the House, and to some extent in the Senate.

Aspinall “. . . got along well with the two senators, probably more because they wanted to get along with him than he wanted to get along with them. He was *extremely* wary, *extremely* wary, of diversions . . .”

He also got along well with the two senators, probably more because they wanted to get along with him than he wanted to get along with them. He was *extremely* wary, *extremely* wary, of diversions, but it was finally worked out that the 69,200 acre feet of water annually came from the Upper Colorado River into the Arkansas River.

“. . . I'll never forget when I saw that diversion out of the tunnel [on the Fryingpan-Arkansas Project] in 1992, knowing *all* of the work that had gone into it, it just looked like a miracle to me. . . .”

And I'll never forget when I saw that diversion out of the tunnel in 1992, knowing *all* of the work that had gone into it, it just looked like a miracle to me. It was just fantastic. (Monberg crying.)

“. . . that got me interested in the Upper Colorado Project . . .”

In any event, that got me interested in the Upper Colorado Project, because I started to work with Aspinall relative to Fryingpan.

“ . . . in those days we thought something was going to happen on Upper Colorado . . . most of those projects . . . were shelved, because they couldn't meet the benefit-cost ratio. . . .”

Of course, in those days we thought something was going to happen on Upper Colorado, which most of those projects became—were shelved, because they couldn't meet the benefit-cost ratio.

**Worked Part Time for the *Congressional Quarterly*
from 1949 to 1964**

But in any event, after I began to learn something about this, I would say probably about in the early fifties, I'm not sure exactly about the date, because I did part-time work for C-Q⁵ from 1949, because they were interested in my Interior expertise, from 1949 to 1964.

“That took up a good portion of my time, but I know that I lined up a number of papers relative to Upper Colorado projects in the early fifties . . .”

That took up a good portion of my time, but I know that I lined up a number of papers relative to Upper Colorado projects in the

5. The *Congressional Quarterly*.

early fifties, the most important was the *Daily Sentinel* at Grand Junction. I am not sure whether it was Walter Walker or Preston Walker. Walter Walker was the first publisher, and then Preston Walker followed him; he was his son. In any event, they were very much interested in the projects *all over* western Colorado, particularly in the central part of the Western Slope.

I also lined up the *Daily Herald* at Durango. Arthur Ballentine published that. He was very much interested in the projects such as Animas-La Plata in the Four Corners area. I also lined up the *Daily Times* at Farmington, New Mexico, which was published by Lincoln O'Brien. And they were very much interested in the Upper Colorado projects, including the Indian projects, up northwestern New Mexico. I also, for a time, had the *Gallup Independent* in New Mexico, and the *Flagstaff Sun*, in Flagstaff, Arizona. I had those papers, particularly the *Sentinel*, for a number of years.

“ . . . it became apparent that a lot of these projects were not going to move anytime soon. . . . I was getting into other things, because by that time, I was big into the scholarship deal, which has been the other passion of my life. . . . ”

I am not sure when that coverage started to diminish, but it became apparent that a lot of these projects were not going to move anytime soon. Their interest waned, and I was getting into other things, because by that time,

I was big into the scholarship deal, which has been the other passion of my life.

“Then, of course, I decided to start my newsletter in 1965. The Upper Colorado coverage continued through *Wrap-Up* . . .”

Then, of course, I decided to start my newsletter in 1965. The Upper Colorado coverage continued through *Wrap-Up*, up until the time that I had to discontinue it.

“ . . . one of the last stories I wrote was on the Colorado River oversight hearings . . . in June. . . . a very interesting story, because the water is so limited, and everybody is in for a share of the water, and there's just no way. They can't all do it. Of course, it's not going to be divided on the basis of need, it's going to be divided on the basis of political heft. . . .”

As a matter of fact, one of the last stories I wrote was on the Colorado River oversight hearings, which Chairman [Bill] Bradley, of the Senate Water Subcommittee, held in June. And I got a number of kudos for that story. It was a very interesting story, because the water is so limited, and everybody is in for a share of the water, and there's just no way. They can't all do it. Of course, it's not going to be divided on the basis of need, it's going to be divided on the basis of political heft. That's just the reality.

Next question?

Storey: Next question. Okay. You said in 1947 you went back to Leadville, and then [unclear]--

Monberg: Yeah, we've been over all that.

Storey: Okay. When did you come back to Washington?

Monberg: I'd been in Washington all the time.

Storey: You were just on vacation in Colorado.

"I used to travel a month each summer. . . ."

Monberg: Right. Yeah. Sure. I used to travel a month each summer.

Storey: So you were basically just an independent reporter?

"I was just like any other person who has a news bureau here. People line up papers and they get accredited to the press gallery, and away they go. . . ."

Monberg: I was just like any other person who has a news bureau here. People line up papers and they get accredited to the press gallery, and away they go. It's done by everybody. There wasn't anything new about it. It's just a way of life around here.

Storey: Who was the first commissioner of the Bureau of Reclamation you met?

Monberg: I've been trying to think about who it was.

- Storey: Did you meet Mike Strauss?
- Monberg: I knew Bureau of Rec commissioners before I started to cover for my newspapers. Oh, sure, I knew Mike Strauss. I just don't remember who the first one was.
- Storey: How about Harry Bashore?
- Monberg: Oh, I knew them all. I knew all of them. But my memory loss is so extensive, and I don't make much effort to remember the past. I learned one thing about memory loss. Doctors don't give you very much help on what do you do about things, but I learned when I was—on my last hike in 1992 in Fort Missoula, in Missoula, Montana, I met a man who had memory loss, and he said something which is absolutely true. He said, "Your mind has a mind of its own. You can remember if you want to remember." It's amazing how you can do it. You stub your toe because of some damn fool thing you've done, and you remember next time not to do it. Your memory is really jogged. But I just don't recall. And the other thing is I'm so much interested in the present and the future, that the past just doesn't have that much attraction to me.
- Storey: Well, let's see what we can mine out of the past for you.
- Monberg: No, I really—there won't be that much. It's just not there.

Storey: Well, let's see. Do you remember Dexheimer or Michael Strauss at all? What were they like?

“The one that I remember is Dominy. . . .”

Monberg: I remember them. that's just it. I am telling you, I remember them, I know they're Reclamation commissioners, that's it. The one that I remember is Dominy.⁶

Storey: Tell me about Floyd Dominy, then.

Monberg: The others, forget it. And, of course, Underwood,⁷ the most recent commissioner. And Dan Beard,⁸ sure, but the others, they didn't make that much difference, to be real honestly. They just didn't make that much difference. Dominy made a difference. The president knew who the Reclamation commissioner was when Dominy was there. He *totally dominated* not just the Bureau of Rec, but the Interior Department. What Floyd Dominy wanted, he got.

“He was just one hell of a commissioner. . . .”

He was just one hell of a commissioner.
Today people would spit on him because of

6. Floyd E. Dominy contributed to Reclamation's oral history program.

7. Dennis Underwood contributed to Reclamation's oral history program.

8. Daniel P. Beard contributed to Reclamation's oral history program and is largely responsible for the program's founding and success.

his attitude. This guy was about as macho as they ever get, and he totally—he didn't give a damn about birds and bees. The *whole bag* of that era was summed up in Floyd Dominy, but he was sharp as hell.

In future years, respect will once again be accorded to Dominy, not because of his excesses, but because the Bureau of Rec basically is an agency which was developed to provide supplemental water for farming use. And ultimately, the urban uses came along. There's nothing wrong with it. Today it's looked upon as being a terrible thing to do, but it was the way to do it. Anyone would have done it the same way if he or she had been in that position.

“ . . . Dominy was just one hell of a good commissioner. The others, really, what difference did it make? . . . ”

And Dominy was just one hell of a good commissioner. The others, really, what difference did it make? They just weren't that important. I'm just being honest with you, but they weren't that important.

Storey: What was Dominy's personality like?

“ . . . he brought a lot of respect because he knew what he was doing. In that regard, he and Dan Beard are very much alike. . . . ”

Monberg: Oh, he was a great guy. He was a great guy. Very forceful, very blunt, very outspoken,

very much over the plate, didn't suffer fools in any way, and he brought a lot of respect because he knew what he was doing.

Dan Beard

In that regard, he and Dan Beard are very much alike. You might not like what Dan Beard was doing, most people in the Bureau of Rec don't, but he *knows* what he's doing. Dominy knew what he was doing.

There are a lot of people around in public life who don't have the slightest idea about what they're doing, so there's a lot of cynicism, because the government proves to be so ineffective under that kind of leadership.
...

END SIDE 1, TAPE 1. AUGUST 10, 1994.

BEGIN SIDE 2, TAPE 1. AUGUST 10, 1994.

Storey: You were saying that Dominy and Beard are very effective because they know what they're doing . . .

Monberg: Exactly.

Storey: . . . and what they want to achieve.

Monberg: Exactly.

Storey: What is it that you think Dominy wanted to achieve, from your perspective?

Monberg: He wanted to put as much land under cultivation as he possibly could, and to make the Bureau of Rec as effective as he possibly could. He achieved that objective in the time that he was commissioner. As I say, Lyndon Johnson knew that Floyd Dominy was there. I would say that at least [Bill] Clinton would know Beard's—he wouldn't know what Beard was doing, but Clinton would know that Beard is *there*. Johnson would know what Dominy was doing, too. There was a personal relationship there. But then also, Johnson is from one of the seventeen Reclamation states and, of course, Clinton is not. But in addition to that, Beard has a special relationship with the vice president because of his re-inventing government. He is regarded as being the outstanding example as to how government's re-invented.

“Whether there will be any Bureau of Rec *left* after he gets finished is a debatable question, but the time had come to cut back on the Bureau and its programs, and *at least he went ahead and did it*. . .”

Whether there will be any Bureau of Rec *left* after he gets finished is a debatable question, but the time had come to cut back on the Bureau and its programs, and *at least he went ahead and did it*. He wasn't screwing around on it as they have with Corps reorganization. He has gone right ahead and damn the torpedoes, move ahead. There are some errors that have been made, and there will continue

to be errors made, but the goal is a laudable goal.

Storey: Is that what you see Dan Beard as wanting to do . . .

Monberg: Sure.

Storey: . . . is to . . .

Monberg: Of course!

Storey: . . . change the Bureau?

Monberg: Oh, my God!

Storey: Change it to what?

Monberg: Of course! Of course!

Storey: Tell me what you perceive he wants . . .

Monberg: No, there's no question. He says every time. Every time he talks, for God's sake, he says, "They don't want the Bureau to be a water development agency any more. They want it to be a water management agency." You read the papers, don't you?

Storey: And what does that mean to you, Helene?

“ . . . you're not going to have any new programs. You're not going to have any new projects. You're going to just manage the projects that you've got and some way *or other*, you're going to get more water to the urban areas. . . . ”

Monberg: For God's sake! It means you're not going to have any new programs. You're not going to have any new projects. You're going to just manage the projects that you've got and some way *or other*, you're going to get more water to the urban areas. Gees! That's just . . . Jesus that's just . . .

Storey: So you see a definite trend from irrigation to urban uses.

Transfer of water from ag to urban uses “. . . started long before Beard, and that will continue long after Beard. . . .”

Monberg: Oh, well, that started long before Beard, and that will continue long after Beard. *Of course*, that's what it's *always* been about.

“Look at Central Arizona Project. It . . . was going to be an irrigation project, where the water would ultimately go to the urban areas. Somehow or other the irrigation never developed . . . So a lot of the water will be used for settling Indian water rights questions in Arizona . . .”

Look at Central Arizona Project. It started out with the idea that it was going to be an irrigation project, where the water would ultimately go to the urban areas. Somehow or other the irrigation never developed, and it skipped that portion, or it didn't develop *much*, and it's going to the urban areas. And of course, there's a lot of water left over, because the irrigators didn't pick *up* the

allocation that was for them. So a lot of the water will be used for settling Indian water rights questions in Arizona, which has, first of all, a lot of Indian tribes, and, secondly, has a lot of unresolved Indian water rights questions.

But gees! Why are you asking me questions like that?

Storey: Because I need *your* perspective. *I know* what Dan Beard is saying.

“ . . . it was all planned before he came down there. He and [Congressman George] Miller knew what they were doing before he ever took the job. . . . ”

Monberg: No, it's not my perspective, everybody knows that. That's what everything Beard says. Of course, it was all planned before he came down there. He and Miller knew what they were doing before he ever took the job. But that doesn't have anything to do about this. That's today's . . .

Storey: Tell me about George Miller and Dan Beard, and how they interact. What do you perceive is going on there?

Monberg: Well, it's not what I perceive, it's what *is* going on, because that's what everybody sees. George Miller does not like the Bureau of Reclamation. George Miller feels that the Central Valley Project has sucked up a lot of water which should have gone elsewhere in the state. First of all, he doesn't give that

much of a damn about Southern California, either. He doesn't give a damn about the Bureau. But he feels that there is undue subsidy to a whole lot of irrigators in the Central Valley who have gotten rich on the basis of that subsidy, and have used too much water, and it is time for a change.

“When Clinton came in . . . Miller had only one request, and that was Dan Beard . . . be Reclamation commissioner. I had the first story on it . . . I was shocked that anybody would want to *run* the Bureau of Reclamation who was as critical of it as Dan Beard was. . . .”

Dan Beard totally agrees with him. When Clinton came in, obviously everybody who was a committee chairman—of course, it was a Democrat—had an opportunity to suggest who he wanted to be in the administration, and Miller had only one request, and that was Dan Beard. He wanted him to be Reclamation commissioner.

I had the first story on it when this was first told me. I was shocked, and the reason that I was shocked was that I felt that anybody that was *as critical* of the Bureau as Miller—I wasn't shocked that Miller wanted to have somebody in the Bureau of Reclamation, but I was shocked that anybody would want to *run* the Bureau of Reclamation who was as critical of it as Dan Beard was.

“. . . this is what they had planned. . . . it was time to change the lock which they perceive the

agricultural water users have on the Bureau of Rec water, and they feel that the Bureau of Rec has become bloated. . . . In many ways they are *totally right*. In my view, many of Miller's criticisms of C-V-P are well taken. . . ."

But this is what they had planned. They have long since decided that it was time to change the lock which they perceive the agricultural water users have on the Bureau of Rec water, and they feel that the Bureau of Rec has become bloated. It really doesn't know where it's going. It is time for a change.

In many ways they are *totally right*. In my view, many of Miller's criticisms of C-V-P are well taken. What very much concerns me about Miller is that he is so anti many of the things that the C-V-P people have done, that even if they did something right, he would smell a mouse some place. He would feel that there was something wrong, even if they were doing it right.

"Beard went in with that attitude. Beard is going to be changing some of his views on that, simply from day-to-day contact with the people in C-V-P . . . Dan is sharp as hell. . . . I have wondered whether . . . there might be a divergence between Dan and Miller on some of the things which Miller would like Dan to do . . ."

Beard went in with that attitude. Beard is going to be changing some of his views on that, simply from day-to-day contact with the people in C-V-P, because there are some

excellent people who are running C-V-P programs, and he will see that, because Dan is sharp as hell. He will know what the situation is. I have wondered whether, as time goes by, whether there might be a divergence between Dan and Miller on some of the things which Miller would like Dan to do, which he may find he is unable to do.

I don't know whether that will happen, and, of course, I am not that close to these people at this point, to be able to tell whether that has happened, but it has appeared to me for sometime that this might occur. It's well known that Beard and Miller have had some knock-down, drag-out fights in the past, even while Beard was working for Miller. Beard is going to give his best judgment of what the situation is, Miller might not like it, and they might have a big hassle over it. But Miller respects Beard. He will ultimately listen, at least to some point, but when Miller—when the chips are really down, there are only three people that I know in the whole world who don't give a damn that anybody else thinks, when the chips are really down, he's going to do it his way, and they are George Miller, Cito Gaston, who is the manager of the Toronto Blue Jays, and myself. They're the only people that I know. Most people are going to cut and fill. But when the chips are down, Miller is going to do it his way, and I don't know, with the budget situation being what it is, how *simpatico* Miller will be with Beard all the way down the road. They basically get along well, they understand each other. This

is an alliance which has been going on for a number of years. It will continue to go on for many more years. These people will have beers together when they're seventy-five years old. There is a real, honest-to-God friendship there, which tends to cement the political alliance.

“ . . . the morale of the Bureau is shot. People don't know what the hell to expect. They hate Edward (Ed) Osann, Beard's backup. . . .”

But the morale of the Bureau is shot. People don't know what the hell to expect. They hate [Edward (Ed)] Osann, Beard's backup. Beard's been critical of the Bureau. Osann is like Miller, he hates the Bureau.

“A lot of the people in the Bureau are just waiting it out . . . then they'll take a free breath, they feel, when he's gone. But there is a lot of concern within the Bureau about where it's going. . . .”

A lot of the people in the Bureau are just waiting it out, and they feel that they'll do the best they can while Beard's there, then they'll take a free breath, they feel, when he's gone. But there is a lot of concern within the Bureau about where it's going.

“ . . . a lot of things that Beard is doing is right, because the only way that you can cut a bureaucracy is go in and *cut* it, because a bureaucracy will never cut itself. . . .”

But a lot of things that Beard is doing is right, because the only way that you can cut a bureaucracy is go in and *cut* it, because a bureaucracy will never cut itself. Bureaucracy is the most, so far as institutional is concerned, is the most selfish entity in the world. They're only interested in their own paychecks. They don't give a damn about the overall.

And one of the things that interested me when I got such an outpouring of letters when I couldn't continue *Wrap-Up*, and I told people I couldn't continue it. One man, who I have a lot of respect for, who has since retired from the Interior Department, he didn't work for the Bureau of Rec, they work for a very respected agency within the Interior Department, perhaps the most respected, he said, "In periods of downsizing, the agencies tend to fight for turf even more than ever." And of course, that's the last thing that Secretary [Bruce] Babbitt has wanted to have the Bureau do, and the department do, but if that is true, and I don't know that it is true, I haven't had a chance to check it out, and, of course, I have no way to check it out at the present time, because I'm not going to take my time doing it and present myself as somebody out of the air on something like that, but if that is true, that hurts our country, because if you can't work together when things are tough, that doesn't help the country. That just is more gridlock. That's just plain stupid.

Storey: Who was it that said that?

Monberg: I didn't get your question.

Storey: Who was it who said that?

Monberg: It was a man who has since retired from the Interior Department.

Storey: Do you remember his name?

Monberg: Yes, I know his name, I know his name well, but I didn't know it was going to come up this morning, and I wouldn't think of using his name without checking with him.

Storey: Oh, fine. Okay. Do you know why Mr. Osann was appointed to his position?

Edward (Ed) Osann

Monberg: Yeah, sure. He was appointed because he got downgraded at the National Wildlife Federation. He was in charge of their water program, and the new man who came in to head the National Wildlife Federation decided that particularly water quantity was not a major consideration anymore, that that should be downgraded and put in with water quality, which is basically an E-P-A [Environmental Protection Agency] regulatory problem. So Ed lost the spot that he had at the National Wildlife Federation, and he needed a job. He was always close to Beard and Miller, so he ended up as being [Beard's] ~~Miller's~~ backup.

Everybody at the Bureau of Rec is . . .
Beard is a real person. Osann is a very remote

person, and he doesn't like the Bureau. And people are not stupid, they know it, and so he is not getting along with the average guy. That doesn't mean that the average guy isn't doing what Osann wants him to do, but it means that the average guy in the Bureau does it with a chip on his shoulder. Osann is not able to generate loyalty, and that hurts the Bureau, too. Osann, incidentally, is extremely able. Beard, Miller, Osann, these people are as able as they come. But Osann simply does not—I don't see how Osann can work for the Bureau, because he is so critical. I don't see how he can take their money.

“He is interested in only one thing, and that is what the Bureau is doing so far as the environment is concerned. That certainly is a terribly important subject . . . But it is certainly not the only consideration, and particularly in these times of downsizing. . . .”

He is interested in only one thing, and that is what the Bureau is doing so far as the environment is concerned. That certainly is a terribly important subject, which the Bureau, of course, has often conveniently forgotten about down the years. But it is certainly not the only consideration, and particularly in these times of downsizing. But there is no question about Ed's ability.

I happen to think that what they did over at the National Wildlife Federation makes a lot of sense, because there aren't going to be new projects in either the Bureau of Rec or the

Corps with the exception relative to the Corps. It will have to do some work on the Midwest floods, not much, but there will have to be some work so that we don't continue to have these *huge* floods every two or three years, which they have turned out to be recently, and which are so terribly costly. And to the extent that the Corps can do it, there will have to be some spent on that, but everybody knows the O-&-M is going up for these agencies and their construction programs are going down. Gees, all you have to do is look at the budget. It's not what *I* say, it's the way life is. The construction budget's way down. In the case of the Corps, they're very grudging about it; in the case of the Bureau, that's the way Beard wants it.

Incidentally, Beard is a budget expert, too. I know he has budget experts there, and I understand he has a recent O-M-B [Office of Management and Budget] man that's come over to be in the Bureau. I don't know who he is, but I understand that situation. But Beard knows budgets himself. He can be his own budget man. He *wants* to cut back on the Bureau, and *in many cases* what Beard wants to do is right.

The Bureau has lost its way, and it had gotten bloated. Now, of course, whether Beard personally is spending right is something else again, because he's spending an awful lot on his office, and he's cutting a number of projects, where another \$5 or \$10,000 might make a little difference,

particularly on those Indian projects in the Dakotas, where, God, they don't have running water yet. But that goes to my difference between the way I would do things and the way other people would do things. The Bureau's being run by Dan Beard, and he would do it that way. There are a lot of things, so far as personal needs are concerned, that in relation to other people I just never had. For example, I never had a car, don't want one, don't give a damn.

Next question.

Storey: Well, we keep hearing rumors at Reclamation that Mr. Beard is lobbying to be the assistant secretary of the army in charge of the Corps. You heard anything about that?

Dennis Underwood Wanted to Be Assistant Secretary of the Army in Charge of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

Monberg: No, but that was the job that Underwood wanted. He had to settle for Reclamation commissioner, but that was the job he wanted, to be assistant secretary of the army in charge of the Corps.

Expects Changes in Leadership at the Top of Reclamation Because of Politics

I would tend to doubt it. Beard would not have the same kind of backing on the Hill if he had that job, that he would have as Reclamation commissioner. However, I

would not be at all surprised to see a number of changes made relative to the top command of the Bureau of Rec, but it has nothing to do with people's ability, it has to do with politics. This administration is in so much trouble. We see this morning that Tony Coehlo is going to, in effect, replace [David] Wilhelm as the chairman of the Democratic National Committee, and that's just the tip of the iceberg.

“I look to see a lot of changes, because there is a lot of unhappiness both within the Bureau and among water users relative to the present leadership of the Bureau of Rec. . . .”

I look to see a lot of changes, because there is a lot of unhappiness both within the Bureau and among water users relative to the present leadership of the Bureau of Rec. At some point somebody who is politically attuned may decide that it's time for a change and then get somebody in there who's not going to rock the boat.

“I think Beard has changed the Bureau so much that there is no way; you'll never get the boat the same as it was. . . . I would not be at all surprised to see the effort made. . . .”

I think Beard has changed the Bureau so much that there is no way; you'll never get the boat the same as it was. It just may be too late to make any changes like that. I would not be at all surprised to see the effort made.

Storey: Who would you see as being moved around or whatever in this move?

“I think both Beard might go and I think Osann would be the first one to go. . . .”

Monberg: I think both Beard might go and I think Osann would be the first one to go.

Storey: Where do you think this might come from?

Monberg: I haven't any idea—well, it would come from the pols. It would come from the people on the Hill who are unhappy with the way that they're operating.

Storey: Are there any in particular, though, who are upset with the way Reclamation is going now?

“ . . . there's just a general feeling that the reorganization of the Bureau of Rec has gone too far . . . This is the kind of thing which is quiet behind the scenes. It's not something which is out in front . . . ”

Monberg: Well, there's just a general feeling that the reorganization of the Bureau of Rec has gone too far, whether you're talking about members of Congress from California, or Idaho, or Colorado, or New Mexico—whatever. This is the kind of thing which is quiet behind the scenes. It's not something which is out in front, except in Arizona. Governor Goddard deliberately—deliberately—while Miller was out there having oversight hearings of the Central Arizona Project in late spring, he

deliberately signed contracts with water users for C-A-P water, which Miller was opposed to. He *deliberately* did it to spit in his eye.

There is a lot of that feeling. They feel that, first of all, the feds ought to get the hell out, which, of course, the feds can't do, because the water is their water. And there is a feeling that Miller, himself, is so anti-Bureau of Rec, which he is, that they are going to be a counterbalance to it. But I was surprised when I saw the clips on that, this did not happen here, this happened out in Arizona. I believe it was at a meeting they had at Phoenix, that the committee had, and Goddard, deliberately, while Miller was there, signed the contracts with water users, selling the water at prices which the water users felt they could afford. And of course, those prices are awfully, awfully low.

“The Bureau of Rec is taking a big shellacking relative to C-A-P . . . C-A-P was authorized in 1968. It was just as the environmental movement was coming along . . . Bureau of Rec was coming up against the *new* thinking relative to how to do things and include the environment. So many of the compromises that were made were so expensive. . . there is never going to be any way in the world that water's going to be repaid . . . That's just a reality. . . .”

The Bureau of Rec is taking a big shellacking relative to C-A-P, and a lot of it is not the fault of the Bureau of Rec. A lot of it is the fault of time, because when C-A-P was

first authorized in 1968, the—incidentally, I think Fryingpan was 1964 rather than 1968.⁹ I believe I said 1968. But no question, C-A-P was authorized in 1968. It was just as the environmental movement was coming along, and so what happened was that a proposal switch had made sense from the standpoint of the *old* thinking relative to the Bureau of Rec was coming up against the *new* thinking relative to how to do things and include the environment. So many of the compromises that were made were so expensive that they added to the cost of the project, to the point where the project is over cost now, *actually* over cost. We're not talking about all the lawyer business, but *actually* putting out actual *bucks*. The feds, this means the Bureau of Rec, Department of the Interior, are out about \$5-, \$6 billion, the cost of the project. And there is never going to be any way in the world that water's going to be repaid, because there's no water user that's able to pay the cost in the forty-, fifty-year period that a project's supposed to be repaid. There is *no* way. It just can't happen. That's just a reality.

“The water users are hot about it because they feel a lot of this stuff was pushed on them, whether they wanted it or not, by the pols who were in at the time, and that is correct. . . .”

The water users are hot about it because they feel a lot of this stuff was pushed on them,

9. The president signed the act authorizing the Fryingpan-Arkansas Project in 1962.

whether they wanted it or not, by the pols who were in at the time, and that is correct.

The other thing is, they've got a tremendous subsidy. This is the type of thing that Beard has been looking at, and rightly so. *All of the subsidies* should be looked at, not just Bureau's subsidies, the agricultural subsidies, because they fit together. The whole thing should be looked at. But gees, we see today there's going to be . . .

END SIDE 2, TAPE 1. AUGUST 10, 1994.

BEGIN SIDE 1, TAPE 2. AUGUST 10, 1994.

Storey: This is tape two of an interview by Brit Storey with Helene Monberg, on August the 10th, 1994.

So nobody's going to be doing anything in Agriculture because of . . .

Monberg: Yeah, nobody's going to be doing anything in the Agriculture Department on changing subsidies now, because they don't know where the hell they're going. They don't whether the secretary they've got is going to continue, or whether there's going to be a new secretary.

Storey: That's [Mike] Espy?

Monberg: That's Espy.

Storey: You're referring to the news stories about [unclear] . . .

Monberg: The agricultural subsidies that had been built into the farm program. See, they fit with the subsidies that have been built into the Bureau of Rec program. C-A-P is a big mess, and thank God—thank God—Babbitt has in there—I don't know whether he has the backbone of a Janet Reno, but by God, she knows what she's doing. I haven't known very many women who knew a damn thing about water, literally, didn't know a damn thing about water.

Betsy Rieke and Pat Mulroy

There are two women that I have met in recent years who not only know about water, but that are head and shoulders above most of the guys, and they are Betsy Reike,¹⁰ who is the assistant secretary of interior for water and science at the present time, who is one hell of a good water lawyer. She represented Salt River. That tells it all. Salt River does *not* employ incompetents. She *really* knows her stuff. I was really impressed at her confirmation hearing. And the other is Pat Mulroy,¹¹ who is the general manager of the Southern Nevada Water Authority. She has gone after water for Las Vegas, and, believe me, I would never bet against her, never. Whether she needs the water or not is beside the point. By God, she is tough as nails. These two can hold their own anywhere. They are sharp. But Betsy Reike used to be

10. Betsy Rieke contributed an oral history interview to Reclamation's Newlands Project Oral History Series.

11. Pat Mulroy contributed an oral history interview to Reclamation's Newlands project Oral History Series.

chairman, or director, rather, of the Arizona State Water Commission. Prior to that, she was an attorney in private practice representing Salt River. And she knows the subject extremely well. If something's going to be worked out, that would be great.

The only thing, as I am not sure whether if they work out something sensibly, whether Babbitt would be able to sell it to the White House because of the political implications. If you're going to protect the federal interest, that means that some of the water users are going to be burned, and it is up to the federal officials to protect the federal interest.

And Clinton has pulled the rug out from under Babbitt in the past, and I just don't know what would happen. It may be that with [Leon] Panetta there that he could stop some of that, but I doubt it. Clinton is like me; he's going to run his own show when the chips are down. He's not going to listen to anybody, he's going to do it the way he wants to do it. I don't know. They could work out, because Babbitt is extremely able, too. He's the ablest Secretary of the Interior that I've known since Harold Ickes, who was back in the forties, and he was extremely able.

Senators Milliken, Johnson, and Mark Hatfield

I want to mention some things here which I don't think you're going to bring up. I want to be sure, to the extent that I remember it, that these are mentioned. This is relative to

all of the water projects. I had an opportunity to deal very closely with these men from 1947 until they got off the stage, which is probably about ten-, fifteen years later, so far as water is concerned. I mentioned to you about Senator Milliken. He was ranking minority of the Senate Interior Committee, and he was to some extent like Senator [Mark O.] Hatfield, who is the ranking Republican of the Senate Appropriations Committee. Even though he was a Republican in a Democratic administration and in a Democratic Congress, they're willing to work with Democrats, and their ability is such that—or was such, in the case of Milliken—that they brought a lot of respect and they were very effective. I happen to have some considerable reservations about Hatfield, but there's no question about his effectiveness.

Relative to Milliken, he was an extremely able, conscientious, persistent man, *and* he was *well* connected. He was married to the wife of a former senator whose name I've forgotten, but Mrs. Milliken had been married to another senator. Her first husband had died and then she married Milliken. It seems to me that they'd been law partners. And he had this great ability to work in a bipartisan matter on natural resource issues. His partner in that deal or in that situation was Senator Ed Johnson—Edwin C. Johnson. Everybody called him Ed or Big Ed. He was a former governor of Colorado, and therefore, he knew the state very well. He knew all where everything fit in the state, which the

next governor will know, and he'd been governor for several years, so he really knew the state. He was also from northwestern Colorado. He was shrewd. He was a man of the people. This is the kind of guy who would have rooted for the Buffalo Bills, a blue-collar type. Very shrewd. It seems to me that he was chairman of the Senate Commerce Committee during most of this time. And he did not have the intellectual stature that Milliken had, but between the two of them, they were effective in persuading other people, particularly on the Appropriations Committee, to do the things that they wanted done.

Senators Clinton P. Anderson and Dennis Chavez of New Mexico

The other two senators that I worked with very closely were Senator Clinton P. Anderson of New Mexico, who was chairman of the Senate Interior Committee, and Senator Dennis Chavez, who was chairman of the Senate Public Works Committee. Both of them were extremely interested in putting New Mexico first. And they were very conscious that it was a very small state, population-wise, much smaller than it is today, because New Mexico is growing very fast now, but in those days, it was really a backwater. Again, Chavez was the man who was a man of the people and he did not have the intellectual ability, nor did he have the top connections that Anderson had.

But Anderson was like Milliken. He was an *extremely* able man. And Anderson was good at looking down the road. He was a Mr. Plan Ahead, and to the extent that there *was* any development in New Mexico which, of course, there was some in the northwestern part of the state, in the Upper Colorado Project there wasn't nearly as much as had once been envisioned, of course, but what there was, these two working together largely made possible.

Senator Joseph O'Mahoney

I did not follow Wyoming. I never had papers in Wyoming, but you simply could not overlook a senator there by the name of Senator Joseph C. O'Mahoney, Joe O'Mahoney. He was a Democrat. All of these were Democrats except Milliken. And of course, Congress has been Democratic most of the time since I've been here. O'Mahoney was a brilliant attorney. He was very much interested in all types of natural resources programs, although I do not recall that he was that close to any of the specific projects, and that may have been that he was not on the authorizing committees. I do not recall. But I know that he was very much interested in Pick-Sloane Plan, I know he's very much interested in the Upper Colorado Project. He also was like Anderson; he was good at looking down the road to the future. He said in some of the considerations of Pick-Sloane, which I wrote about some months ago when I reviewed a book that had been written on the

Upper Missouri, that the man or the entity that controls water controls your destiny. In sum, that was what he was saying in a hearing which made a difference, and you could not overlook O'Mahoney. He was so bright. He was really interested in natural resources, and he worked very well with these people, particularly with Milliken. These are people who make a lot of difference so far as our part of the West is concerned in the Reclamation program.

Storey: Do you remember how to spell O'Mahoney's name?

Monberg: Yes, it was O-M-A-H-O-N-E-Y. And Milliken was M-I-L-L-I-K-E-N. Johnson without a T; Anderson, of course; Chavez, C-H-A-V-E-Z. (Storey: Uh-huh.)

Congressman Clair Engle

They were just outstanding. There was another person who helped on the Upper Colorado Project, who had nothing to do with it, of course, but was a close friend of Wayne Aspinall, and that was Clair Engle of California. He was chairman of the House Interior Committee. My recollection, it was C-L-A-I-R, Engle, E-N-G-L-E. He was also an *extremely* able person, very much interested in water development, naturally, being from California. You had the impression, relative to Engle, that he wasn't after your water, you know, the Upper Basin's water. With so many of the Californians, you

know, "Just give it to us. If you don't give it to us, we'll take it from you." But however it worked out, you had a feeling that he would be, to the extent that politicians are fair—you know, they're not judges—that he would be relatively fair. Of course, Aspinall was there always to represent the Upper Colorado interests. Engle was extremely important in putting some of those early projects together, extremely important, both in California and relative to the early days of the Colorado River projects. A very, very able man.

Storey: You've mentioned that Aspinall's interest in the Colorado River, but you also mentioned that he's very wary of diversions.

Wayne Aspinall's Concerns about Diversions

Monberg: Sure.

Storey: Could you talk about that, please?

“ . . . the Colorado River Basin . . . is very much *unbalanced* so far as population is concerned, because *all* of the population, or at least 90 percent of it, is either in the Lower Basin . . . or it is in areas *outside* of the Colorado Basin, like Denver, like Colorado Springs, like Pueblo. . . .”

Monberg: Sure. The Upper Colorado area, which is from Flagstaff north to probably almost to the Wyoming, Montana line, and, of course, includes Wyoming, Colorado, New Mexico, Utah, and a portion of northeastern Arizona, *that* probably contributes at least 70 percent of

the water to the Colorado River Basin, and the basin is very much *unbalanced* so far as population is concerned, because *all* of the population, or at least 90 percent of it, is either in the Lower Basin, which means Nevada, Arizona, and California, *or it is* in areas *outside* of the Colorado Basin, like Denver, like Colorado Springs, like Pueblo.

So the people in the Upper Colorado River Basin—and that hasn't changed any today from the days when I started in on this work— they are very wary of diversion, because they are afraid that by the time that they develop, the water that they will need for development will not be there. They also feel that their development will be hindered, because so much water will be diverted. And this is a very real and realistic fear.

“The fascinating thing . . . has been that the environmentalists who opposed diversions, in most cases . . . are suddenly not talking about that any longer . . . and they feel that the only way that they can do it . . . is to get in bed with the urban areas that *a/ways* want more water. . . .”

The fascinating thing that I have noticed in my writing on diversions has been that the environmentalists who opposed diversions, in most cases, because diversions screw up the ecosystem of the area where the diversion takes place, are suddenly not talking about that any longer, and the reason that they aren't is that they want more water for whatever it is that fish and wildlife or watering the river or

whatever, and they feel that the only way that they can do it, and they're probably right, is to get in bed with the urban areas that *always* want more water. I mean, that's an article of faith. If you're an urban area, you're always looking for more water.

“ . . . the effort is being made . . . to break the *lock* which . . . the farming interests have had on water, so that the urban areas get a larger crack at it. Of course, most of that is diverted water, one way or the other . . . They have tied up with the urban areas to break that agricultural lock . . . ”

And so, particularly relative to the Colorado River, the effort is being made, and this is also true of California, to break the *lock* which there has been that the farming interests have had on water, so that the urban areas get a larger crack at it. Of course, most of that is diverted water, one way or the other, whether it is diverted from one basin into another, or whether it is diverted within a basin. They have tied up with the urban areas to break that agricultural lock, which they are now in the process of doing, and they are doing it for their own interests, because then they can have some additional water, which will go to the things that they are interested in, which is primarily fish and wildlife and water quality. So you don't hear them bitching about diversion the way they used to. It just doesn't happen.

“I'll never forget the first day when I . . . [learned] that the urban interests and the environmental

interests had gotten together on this . . . It undoubtedly had happened sometime before . . . but that told me that now the alliances had shifted. . . .”

I'll never forget the first day when I asked an attorney for the urban water interests, why was it that they had agreed with something that Miller wanted in the bill, the now famous 1992 comprehensive water bill¹² which became law, and the answer was that the urban interests and the environmental interests had gotten together on this, and that's the first time that I was aware. It undoubtedly had happened sometime before, but I just wasn't aware of it in my busy, busy life, but that told me that now the alliances had shifted.

“I thought that diversion was going to pretty much wind down. It will not. Diversion will continue because the environmentalists and the urban areas want it, and they have the political clout. . . .”

Diversion is going to continue. *I* thought that diversion was going to pretty much wind down. It will not. Diversion will continue because the environmentalists and the urban areas want it, and they have the political clout.

12. Public Law 102-575, the Reclamation Projects Authorization and Adjustment Act of 1992, became law October 30, 1992. The act contained numerous titles, each of which is given a separate title as an “act.”

Storey: Now, could you define diversion for me, because it seems to me as if the definition . . .

Discussion of the Nature of Diversions

Monberg: Diversion, my God! You're just taking water out of one river and putting it in another. That's what diversion is.

Storey: Okay. But it seems as if the definition of diversion is changing from what Wayne Aspinall was thinking about to what the environmentalists are thinking about and so on.

Monberg: I don't think it's changed at all.

Storey: Am I right in thinking that Aspinall was thinking in terms of transcontinental diversions away from western Colorado to the East?

Monberg: No, he was talking about diversion two ways. He was talking about diversion outside of western Colorado *and* the Upper Colorado River Basin to *any other* area, whether it was eastern Colorado, whether it was the diversion that takes place in C-U-P, whether it's the diversion that takes place at the bottom of the area where you have that tremendous aqueduct goes about 200 miles from where the water automatically would have gone out in the Gulf, or in the, what is it, Bay of Mexico, or something like that . . .

Storey: Baja California.

Monberg: . . . to Los Angeles. He was talking about all of those diversions. (Storey Okay.) He had a great concern about that. Diversion *now* means, when we're talking about diversion, it means the whole bag. It means whether you're diverting within one area, from one stream to another, within a basin, and, of course, the environmentalists have some very great points on their side on it, because when you start—say you take 100,000 acre feet away from river B to put in River A, then the little creatures that were depending on river B don't have that water. So that's what they're griping about. It's a *very valid* gripe. Of course, you have to balance the needs of the population against the needs of wildlife.

And of course, for so many years, nobody paid—Dominy couldn't have cared less about the birds and bees. He didn't give a hoot in hell about them. Matter of fact, he didn't know they existed. That's how much he was interested in them. Zero. And, of course, in that he was wrong.

But at some point you have to decide whether it is people you are going to serve or whether it's birds and *bees* that you're to serve. One of the things that has interested me is that the environmentalists, who have gotten extremely sophisticated, now realize, with the budget situation being what it is, that they're not going to be able to get some of the things done that they would like to have had done, because the money isn't there. So they're making these political alliances with the urban

areas, so that they can—well, we know what happened relative to Glen Canyon. A big deal, oh, my God, you're taking care of the environment in Grand Canyon. You are. To some extent you are. You have to have those flows there, at least a minimum flow there to maintain your fishery, rather than taking the water from the area down to Phoenix and Tucson.

But the other side of the coin is never mentioned. You look like a black sheep if you mention it. But the other thing is, the reason that Glen Canyon was changed was not just because of the flows so far as the Colorado River and Grand Canyon were concerned, but because you have this big industry which is built *up* as a *result* of the *projects*, with the recreationists, the rafters, and so forth. And they want even flows, whether even flows happen to be something which was planned for, whether they pay for it, which they don't, whatever the deal is, they've got clout. And this will not always be the situation, I don't think, but at the present time, the recreationists and the environmentalists are big buddies. I think at some point that is going to change, because a lot of recreationists don't give a damn about the birds and bees either. At the present time that's the way it was. That's the way it is in Glen Canyon, and there's a big cutback in the power use of the water at Glen Canyon, peaking power use, so that the water will be relatively even level all the time and will take care of—my God, it's a huge industry which

has built up around there relative to the rafting and boating and so forth in the area.

But it simply is never mentioned. I never seen it mentioned outside of *Wrap-Up*, *ever, anywhere*. Of course, that is one of the reasons that people hung into *Wrap-Up* until hell froze over, because when the chips were down, I would say things that nobody else said, because when the chips are down, I'm going to do it my way, and I don't give a damn what people think. It's the attitude that you absolutely have to have if you are from the long haul going to do it right. That's the great thing about being old: *there is no tomorrow*. You don't have to think about, "Gees, I've got to watch this or watch that." There is no tomorrow, so you can do it right, let it all hang out today.

Storey: "What is X going to do to me if I say Y?"

Monberg: Yeah, exactly.

Storey: You don't have to worry about it.

Monberg: And there is a lot in there. There is a lot of that in there, because you have to think about— if you're in the news business, your news sources tomorrow and all that who's [unclear]. Whatever the deal is, everybody has those pressures on them, and that is the only good thing about getting old. That is a great redeeming feature.

Storey: Well, that's one of the things I'd like to talk to you about, though. Not names necessarily, but who did you go to in order to get your information about water projects?

Monberg: Oh, everybody. Oh, everybody.

Storey: Who were the most important sources? Is it people like the commissioner or is it *staffers* on the Hill, or is it congressmen and senators, or what?

Working Sources in Washington, D.C.

Monberg: Well, if you're in the news business, you learn from everybody. I would have regular appointments to see Wayne Aspinall once a week over on the House side, and whoever else was in for the areas involved. They didn't make that much difference, except Judge Chenoweth.

Then on the Senate side, I would see Milliken, who was head and shoulders over everybody else in his interest on this stuff. And Johnson, and you'd have kind of a special relationship with him, because he was from the boonies, and, you know, he was another Scandinavian, and so forth. Then Senator Anderson, and Senator Chavez was not—he would . . .

END SIDE 1, TAPE 2. AUGUST 10, 1994.
BEGIN SIDE 2, TAPE 2. AUGUST 10, 1994.

Senator Chavez didn't have the—he was in charge of Corps projects. He wasn't in charge of Bureau of Rec projects. He didn't have that much clout, even as a committee chairman. But this man had been in politics for a long time and you could learn subtleties from him. I think women are better at picking up subtleties than men, because they've had to be. Gosh, to be able to talk with people that able on a weekly basis, and occasionally I would interview Clair Engle and, of course, I'd go down and interview people in the Interior Department, the Bureau of Rec.

And, of course, remember, I was covering a lot more than Bureau of Rec and Interior. I covered practically every agency. And, as I say, if I would do a story just on the basis of my own interest, I am more interested in power than I am in water. I find power stories more interesting to write.

“ . . . the commissioners were available to talk to. Then you would have people who would really run the Bureau, that you would go in and talk to. . . .”

But the commissioners were available to talk to. Then you would have people who would really run the Bureau, that you would go in and talk to. You didn't have all this *crap* about the P-R setup, which is just *total crap*.

Bill Klostermeyer

You could just go in, in the late afternoon, and sit down and talk to somebody like Bill

Klostermeyer,¹³ who used to run the Bureau of Rec. He was *not* the commissioner, but this guy knew the Bureau of Rec backwards. He now is working for a private engineering firm here in the district. Just sharp as hell. And the point is, when you talk to people on a basis like that, they're going to level with you. They're not going to say—the politicians won't necessarily—but people like Klostermeyer will level with you. So you find out what's really going on.

See, the problem with the P-Rs is they tell you what they want you to hear, not what you need to know. So I always try to go around them. I have very little use for them, because I don't think they're needed. You need somebody who's a public information person to help on both sides, but a lot of that apparatus is a total waste of time, money, the whole thing. I get terribly impatient with them. I sure as hell don't miss them. The people around *really* there to help the press, *really* there to help the press, you can practically count on the finger of one hand. They're there to feed their faces and to do what their bosses want them to do, and that's it. That they deal with the press is secondary. It's not a good thing for our country, but that's the way it is now.

But you don't have the same setup now. Gees, if I were to go down and talk to Beard, he would have these things all around, he'd

13. Bill Klostermeyer contributed to Reclamation's oral history program.

have a half dozen P-Rs around. Jesus Christ, any chance that you can really get him to level with you, because he has all of those restraints there. You know, it's different. In the days when he was up on the Hill and you sat down and talked to him when he was staff director, sure, he's going to level with you. But he's not going to level with you under the present setup. It's just wrong.

So you have to use your experience and what you pick up from the underground, and that kind of thing, to find out what's going on. You can find out. The problem is it takes so much more time to do it, and when you see your energy level going down, it's irritating. And of course, I'm not known for my diplomacy, because, again, I don't give a damn. If they're not going to take me the way I am, then to hell with them. Of course, with P-Rs, you know, you're supposed to genuflect in front of them. The system's ridiculous.

Storey: Did you also talk to water user's groups and that sort of thing?

**"That's the reason I traveled a month each year. . .
. I *hate* to travel. I didn't travel because I *enjoyed*
it, I traveled because there were certain things
that I wanted to see. . . ."**

Monberg: Oh, of course. Oh, of course. They'd call you. They'd call you. They still call me. They're in town and "What's your problem?" That's the reason I traveled a month each year. Because I didn't travel. I *hate* to travel. I

didn't travel because I *enjoyed* it, I traveled because there were certain things that I wanted to see.

Somebody wrote to me the other day. Bob Phillips wrote to me the other day. He said that he had been my driver on something in western Colorado years ago, and he said it was lined up like a military operation, things that I wanted to see. I had it all lined up as to how to do it, what I wanted to see. That's exactly what I did, because I had to use the time, and I had to use it productively, and all of that—go out and see for yourself what the situation is. And often it's entirely different when you go and look at it. Oh, you absolutely have to do it. My God, they don't have all the answers here. They might not be even asking the right questions.

“ . . . you have to realize that the water users have their own interest, too. Water users don't give a *damn* about the *federal interest*. They don't give a *damn* about the budget. It is no concern to them whatsoever and will *never* be. Their interest is making a buck on whatever the hell that they're into. . . .”

No, you have to go out, but you have to realize that the water users have their own interest, too. Water users don't give a *damn* about the *federal interest*. They don't give a *damn* about the budget. It is no concern to them whatsoever and will *never* be. Their interest is making a buck on whatever the hell that they're into. Of course, so far as Bureau

of Rec is concerned, they're practically all farmers, and to some extent now they're urban users, particularly relative to C-U-P and C-A-P.

“ . . . I look to see the Bureau of Rec *tremendously* cut back in years ahead . . . ”

But I look to see the Bureau of Rec *tremendously* cut back in years ahead, *tremendously* cut back. C-U-P is already out of it. They jumped overboard some years ago. And C-A-P will not be out of it anytime soon, but as soon as they can make some kind of arrangement, they're going to get Uncle Sam off their back. Governor [Pete] Wilson of California has urged that the federal water project, C-V-P, and the State Water Project be combined. It makes sense. Again, they owe the feds a hell of a lot of dough, and it's not going to happen anytime soon, but it will happen.

I look to see the Bureau of Rec ending up with a few odds and ends projects. It won't have the big projects. As a matter of fact, I think the Bureau ultimately will somehow or other be merged with some other agency, just as Osann's water quantity unit was merged with a regulatory unit over at the National Wildlife Federation. I think this will happen, too, because we aren't building for the future relative to water quantity is concerned, because we've used up all our water. There's no more to—there are here and there, but basically it's over.

“ . . . we're moving over to another stage, which means that EPA will become increasingly important. The Bureau will be increasingly less important . . . ”

So we're moving over to another stage, which means that EPA will become increasingly important. The Bureau will be increasingly less important, even in the West.

The Corps will continue to be important. And it's very interesting, because the Corps, if the Bureau was bloated, and the Bureau *was* bloated, the Corps is even more bloated. But with the navigation provisions in the law for the Corps and the need for flood control, which we see last year how important the Corps is, and that emergency work that the Corps does, when the hurricane hit Florida, the woman who was in charge of emergency services for Dade County said, "Where's the cavalry?" What she's saying is, "Where's the Corps?" The Corps couldn't come in until FEMA [Federal Emergency Management Agency] got its act together, and FEMA, took it a long time getting its act together. The Corps, because of those authorizations, the Corps will continue to be important.

Two hundred years from now, the Bureau of Rec, in my opinion—well, a hundred years from now—the Bureau of Rec won't be around. The Corps will still be around. The Corps predates the creation of the country. The Corps's been around since before the Revolutionary War. They are terribly, terribly

malappropriated, excuse me, the people in the Corps are not in the right slots, and there have been several reorganizations to get them in the right slots. And as Dr. Shorsky [phonetic] said the other day relative to the Corps, "I am the only political appointee in an agency of about 35,000." What chance does he have to change the Corps? Zero. The bureaucracy won't let him. The way that they'll cut down the Corps is simply because of the budget, the requirements that you cut back on the budget. That's the way the Corps will be cut back. It's the only way. Totally, the only way.

Storey: You mentioned Commissioner Underwood. Did you remember him?

Dennis Underwood

Monberg: Do I remember Underwood?

Storey: You said you remembered Underwood.

Monberg: Oh, Underwood, I remembered him well.

Storey: What did you think of him as commissioner?

Monberg: I thought he was a crummy commissioner. I thought he was there strictly as a seat-warmer to do nothing, which he did. I have no idea what the hell he did. I don't care, all of the press release and so forth, I can't tell you one *substantive, really* substantive, thing that he did. He was one hell of a nice guy. There was a humanity about Underwood, which I failed to see, when the chips are down, in

Beard. Beard has some humanity about him, but when the chips are down, Beard's going to be ruthless, as is Osann, as is Miller. But there was a real humanity about this guy. And as a person, he was a first-class person. As a Reclamation commissioner, forget it. He just didn't do anything. But then the [George H. W.] Bush administration didn't want him doing anything.

Storey: What about his Strategic Plan?

Monberg: What about it? What the hell, whatever happened to it? I mean, that is just *it*. You put all this crap together, it doesn't amount to a damn. *What the hell did they do* as a result of it? Tell me what they did. I have no idea what the hell they did, because they didn't do anything.

Storey: You called him a seat-warmer?

Monberg: Seat-warmer, yeah.

Storey: What's that?

Monberg: Seat-warmer? Well, there had to be somebody in the job, and so they put him in it.

Storey: How do you spell that?

Monberg: Seat warmer? S-E-A-T . . .

Storey: Oh, a seat warmer.

Monberg: . . . warmer, W-A-R-M-E-R.

Storey: I see.

Monberg: That's all he was. Don't get me wrong, he was a *hell* of a nice guy. My God, Underwood broke his tail for me. But you're asking me honestly. You're not here for me to tell you a lot of crap. The guy did *nothing*, absolutely *nothing*.

Storey: What about Dale Duvall, immediately before him? Do you remember Mr. Duvall?

Monberg: My memory is so bad that outside of Dominy, relative to—I can remember Mike Strauss and that he was very active, and my recollection is he was a pretty effective commissioner. There was no question about Dominy, he was an effective commissioner. And I'm not saying the others weren't, but they sure as hell were not as effective as Strauss and Dominy. Dominy was *it*. I simply have no recollection at all. I would know, and I will know, before I finish up looking at my material, there will be a lot of things that will come to my mind, but they are gone now. Remember that I was involved in so many things all the time. Gees, I was working sixteen, eighteen hours a day, *every* day, *seven* days a week. Then I had the kids on top of that, beginning about 1959, I had these kids that I helped in school. And it was such a tremendously busy period that people who were in secondary jobs like that in government, the Bureau of Reclamation—well, even the secretaries of Interior, I've had problems remembering them. But, you know,

agency heads, hell, they come and go. But I just do not recall him.

There will be some recollections as I look over material. Of course, a lot of the stuff, the stories are gone, but this is what I'll be studying on, and I'll have some interest in it. I'll get some interest in it as I get into it. I hate to do it, but I feel that there is enough really good material, particularly for folks like you, and the reason I'm limiting it to the colleges in Colorado is that you have to put some limitation on your time and effort. Remember, it'll be my time and effort. I'm going to be taking thousands of hours to do this, you know, something I'm not wild about, simply because I feel as a citizen I ought to do it.

Storey: You mentioned earlier that you do remember Ickes.

Harold Ickes

Monberg: Ickes.

Storey: Ickes, as Secretary of Interior. What was he like?

Monberg: He was close to [Franklin D.] Roosevelt. Roosevelt was very much interested in economic problems. And of course, in those days, we're talking about Depression time. Anything that Interior did in the way of providing additional jobs, whether it was through B-I-A [Bureau of Indian Affairs], or

through Bureau of Rec, or Fish and Wildlife Service, naturally, they'd be interested in them. And he was very effective, and I notice his son is, too. I don't know what's going to happen when health care has gotten so screwed up, but to the extent it can be rescued, this is the kind of guy that can do it.

There aren't very many people around who have the experience, who have the political savvy, who have the guts—and I underline guts—to move any program forward. This is the great thing that [Dan] Rostenkowski had. Sure, he was going to provide some pork for himself and other people, but basically he'd keep his eye on the ball and come out with something which is *reasonably, reasonably* good, not great, but that's the story about how laws are made. It's like sausage; you really don't want to look at the way it's done. He's a crook. He's not been made a crook yet, but we all know that "Rosty" was not the most straight-laced guy in the world.

“Roosevelt was the kind of guy who could get things done, and Ickes was the kind of guy who gets things done. Ickes was a guy who really pretty much put Interior on the map. After all, Interior's a backwater agency. . . .”

Roosevelt was the kind of guy who could get things done, and Ickes was the kind of guy who gets things done. Ickes was a guy who really pretty much put Interior on the map. After all, Interior's a backwater agency.

Who pays any attention to Interior? You're talking about something in comparison to State Department, Treasury Department, Defense Department, Justice Department?

Storey: You paid a lot of attention to us over the years at Interior.

Monberg: I know. I know. But that's just the way that the ball bounced. Yeah. But it isn't. You ask ten people in this town who know anything about the government, and Interior's at the bottom of the list. It simply is not an important agency. It is an extremely important department to the West. So far as the West is concerned, there is ***no question whatsoever***. It's not particularly important so far as water's concerned at this time, because Bureau of Rec's work's primarily done. It's important because of public land issues—B-L-M [Bureau of Land Management], and, of course, Babbitt is making decisions for Forest Service, too. Boy, an area like Nevada, where 87 percent of the land is owned by the federal government, you bet your life what decisions those agencies make can make or break a community.

Storey: Has it always been that way, though?

Monberg: Sure.

Storey: I remember, for instance, an engineer sitting down, talking to me, and saying very nostalgically that when he came to Reclamation in the fifties, 5 percent of the

federal budget was the Bureau of Reclamation.

Monberg: Correct. Oh, I'm not sure 5 percent . . .

Storey: Well, a large percentage.

Monberg: *Of the federal budget?*

Storey: That's what he claimed.

Monberg: I would doubt that. I would doubt that. He came to work in the fifties?

Storey: Yeah.

Monberg: No, I think that's wrong. The Bureau of Rec had a big budget, so did the Corps, particularly the Corps. But 5 percent, gees, when you think of what the Defense Department has, (Storey: Sure.) and all of the spinoffs from the Defense Department, I think that's wrong. I don't think that it [unclear].

Storey: So you would still feel that Interior was sort of down the list.

Monberg: Oh, course. Everybody knows it. My God.

Storey: *Throughout* the time you've been in Washington.

Monberg: Sure. Sure. It's always been down the list.

Storey: One of the things I'm interested in, you've been in Washington since the forties.

Monberg: Since 1941.

Storey: You mentioned that you saw the environmental movement get started, basically in the mid- to late sixties. And over the years it's evolved up to the present. How would you characterize the changes you've seen in the environmental movement as they affect water projects—as *it* affects water projects?

Evolution of the Environmental Movement

Monberg: Well, of course, the environmental movement includes a lot of different types of entities that claim that they're environmental. At first, a water project would come up, there was some diversion in it, or there was a dam in it, or something, and the big deal was that the environmentalists would stop it.

And as the Bureau became more efficient and more eager to build dams, the same way with the Corps, the environmentalists *used* this in their promotion for members to say, "Stop this," whatever the dam was, or whatever the diversion was, and this is the way they built their membership.

As I see it, the environmental movement is not that much concerned about dams anymore. They are, but dams are not their major concern. They have moved into things like the Endangered Species Act. They have moved into water quality problems. They are *extremely* sophisticated. Some of the *ablest* people around are working for the

environmental movement. I think the environmental movement, however, has lost a lot of its idealism. I think that there were a lot of people who went to work for the environmental movement initially because they *really* felt the environment had been screwed, and they were *right*, it had been screwed. But I think also that the environmental movement, as it has matured, perhaps this goes with everything, as you get older, you become more cynical. God, nobody is more cynical than I am. But you also should keep some of that idealism, which I try to do through my kids, alive, because otherwise your cynicism is going to eat you up. I don't see that idealism in the environmental movement anymore, either through the environment or through politics. A lot of the kids got in through the Vietnam War and into politics. I just don't see that there.

But the environmental movement, I think, has pretty much hit its peak now. I don't think that the environmental movement, on its own, is able to do nearly as much as it used to. I think it has a major Achilles heel, which will always make it, at least in this kind of time, to some extent ineffective. Albert Gore was on the ticket, and as vice president, because he was an environmentalist.

“ . . . when the chips are down, do you think the White House gives a damn about the environment if it comes up against the economy? . . . ”

But when the chips are down, do you think the White House gives a damn about the environment if it comes up against the economy? Hell, no. Its interest is the economy. And perhaps if we were in the White House, our interest would have to be the same way.

“ . . . the environment is going by the board by this administration. . . .”

But the environment is going by the board by this administration.

“ . . . Clinton . . . embraced the environment, but when the chips were down, his record is that he wasn't that much interested. . . .”

The environment went by the board in Arkansas when Clinton was governor. Why? Because he let Tyson—the Tyson chicken company, whatever their name is—throw all the innards into the Arkansas River. It was polluting the river. Because they were a big honcho and they were a big campaign contributor. He embraced the environment, but when the chips were down, his record is that he wasn't that much interested. I think he is interested in an intellectual standpoint, but when the chips are down politically, I don't think he's that much interested. And the environmentalists are *sick*, and they have *reason* to be sick, because they *really* felt when the administration came in that there were going to be a lot of bills passed which would help the environment.

Okay. What's the most important bill up for renewal? It's the [Endangered] ~~Environmental~~ Species Act. It has to be changed if it's going to be effective. They don't have the clout to change it. Where is the Endangered Species Act? It is going nowhere, because there are so many problems associated with the thing. They don't have the clout to get it through the House and Senate and get it updated. It's only living on appropriations now. Its authorization has expired.

Okay, what's the next one? The next one is Clean Water Act. The Clean Water Act has a lot of problems associated with it, too, particularly on how much you're going to allocate to the states for clean-up. That formula is screwed up, I know for sure, in the House bill, or it was before I was unable to continue my newsletter. The bill has not been finally formulated by the House Public Works Committee, and not long before I had to give up *Wrap-Up*, Chairman [Norman] Mineta told a witness at another hearing, it wasn't Clean Water hearing, he said, "You know, there may be no Clean Water Bill this year," just straight out. And that is absolutely true. The Senate bill has not come to the floor.

The same goes for the Safe Drinking Water Bill. About the only thing which has gotten through committee and gone into conference—it's gone through both houses and gone into conference—is the California Desert Bill. I noticed the other day that two park

bills got voted down. Why? Because of costs. But the problem with the environmentalists, and I can't see why they don't see it, is the solutions that they propose are so damned expensive.

Just take Superfund, for example. Superfund is going nowhere as it presently stands. It *desperately* has to be rewritten so that you finally get to clean-up. Now all they do is go into court and fight over who's going to pay. So your area continues to be polluted. It is *up to the* environmental movement to keep its eye on the ball. The goal is to stop pollution. Okay. So maybe they have a great big scheme which would stop at 100 percent, but the damn thing costs a half billion dollars. Okay. So why not get a scheme which will cost \$100 million, and maybe we'll only clean up 90 percent, but at the end of ten years, at least you have 90 percent cleaned up. This isn't . . .

END SIDE 2, TAPE 2. AUGUST 10, 1994.

BEGIN OF SIDE 1, TAPE 3. AUGUST 10, 1994.

Storey: Third tape of an interview by Brit Storey with Helene Monberg on August 10th, 1994.

You were speaking about the environmentalists.

“ . . . the environmentalists, they are purists on the big programs that they want, and the problem is that there simply is not the money, nor will we

have the money anytime in the foreseeable future
...”

Monberg: Yeah, the environmentalists, they are purists on the big programs that they want, and the problem is that there simply is not the money, nor will we ***have*** the money anytime in the foreseeable future, to do the clean-up that they envision. So if you put your eye on the ball and you do the best you can, you are going to get ahead. You may not have it exactly as you want it, but at least you made some progress. A dirty river is not going to help a kid a generation from now if you have something on the books but it wasn't implemented. And this is my gripe about them. They tend to be very inflexible on what it is that they feel is important, and because of the economics, particularly since last year so far as the Clinton administration is concerned when they passed the budget resolution. The money's just not going to be there. It won't be there in the future, either, because, my God, we're talking about health care, and people don't want to pay for ***that***. If they don't want to pay for their own health care, what are they going to worry about the birds and bees for? They aren't. It's just simple as that. It's just the way the ball bounces. You know, it's too bad, but that's the way it is.

Storey: On another topic, water issues, for the Western Reclamation states, what do you see as the major water issues?

Major Water Issues in the Western United States

Bureau of Reclamation History Program

Monberg: The major water issues are allowing water for endangered species, fish and wildlife, and water quality. The environmentalists are absolutely right on that. This is what they push all the time. They're *absolutely* right, because the water quantity—we aren't going to have new projects. So therefore, you've got to reorient your projects—this is what Dan's talking about—you've got to reorient your projects so that you do provide at least *something* for fish and wildlife, which often have been forgotten. As the environmentalists say, it's the fish and wildlife that are always at the bottom of the list—they're right.

Water quality for everybody. Water quality has improved and Mark Shields said, not too long ago on "McNeil-Lehrer," that he was surprised that it had improved as much as it had, and nobody talked about it. Well, it's not to the interest of the environmentalists to talk about any improvement, because they have to go around talking about Chicken Little in order to get their contributions. That is true, but there are a number of places, particularly like where I come from, in Leadville, at the top of the Arkansas Valley, where you have to be awfully careful that mine drainage, because, my God, you're *right* at the *head-right* at the head of this big river, which is a major tributary of the Mississippi.

Because of the Superfund impasse, something is being done, but not enough, and not soon enough, because of the tremendous

cost, and because the way the law is written, you just don't get off ground zero on it. Of course, the bureaucrats don't give a damn, because all they want to do is get their paycheck at the end of the month, or whenever. But water quality is a major problem, **not everywhere**, but **where** it is a problem, it is a major problem. And that is not just the West, that is everywhere.

You don't see water quantity problems in the press anymore; they just don't show up. I read three papers every day, the *Wall Street Journal*, the *Washington Post*, and the *New York Times*. There will be a **big** water quality problem in those papers—a **big** one—at least once a week. It may not be in the West, but it may be relative to the runoff from farms in the Midwest, for example, or it may be the way that the Everglades have been polluted in Florida, which is a **major, major** problem, or it may be the situation on the border between the United States and Mexico, on the Rio Grande, because the Rio Grande, to some extent, the river flows back and forth and there are problems. Mexico gives us some of its pollution problems, and it has **major** pollution problems, and which they haven't bothered to work on.

This is one of the things the environmentalists have very readily insisted on relative to the trade agreements that we enter into, to do something about the environment. You absolutely have to do it, because if you don't do it, it's like the low

wages. People are going to go where they don't have to do anything about the environment and where they can pay people cheap labor.

That is one of the things where the environmentalists are going to have great staying power, because they are into everything. They are not just looking at whether a dam is built or not built anymore. They are extremely sophisticated, extremely sophisticated. But they do have the problem relative to costs, and so they aren't as effective as they would be otherwise. And there's no question that some of these things are terribly costly, but I have learned that if you really want to do something, I don't give a damn what it is, if you really want to do something, you find a way to do it. If it's just to raise money to bring in people for your organization or whatever the hell, then you're not going to extend yourself, but if you really want to clean up, or *whatever* it is, you can do it some way or other, which is the reason, of course, that I'm shopping around now, because I want to maintain that corpus for the scholarship for the future.

Storey: I'm interested that you don't see the need for *more* water in the West, or is that a misinterpretation of what you're saying?

“ . . . there *isn't* going to be more water in the West, so *forget* it. . . . There were seventeen western states . . . the western side of the Cascades has a lot of water. But other than that,

there is a shortage of water everywhere else in the arid Western United States. . . .”

Monberg: No, there *isn't* going to be more water in the West, so *forget* it. The West is built the way the West is built. There were seventeen western states that have a shortage of water—not totally. The Pacific Northwest, the western side of the Cascades has a lot of water. But other than that, there is a shortage of water everywhere else in the arid Western United States. That is the way that the West was made, and that's the way that it'll be. It will change, of course, over many, many, *many* years, but in our lifetime, and the lifetime of your children, and the kids who are in my scholarship program, and their children, and their children, and their children, it'll always be that way. Because we know, for instance, Antarctica was many years—many, many years—ago was a continent which was not covered with ice. Everything changes, but it's over a long period of time. But for the future that makes any difference *to us*, that's going to be the way it is.

Storey: What do you see as the issues that arise out of that water shortage for the modern West?

“ . . . it'll be the same thing. There won't be any difference. . . . The upper and lower basin will continue to fight over Colorado River water . . . Southern California will continue to want water from the Sierra Nevadas, and it'll continue to want water from Northern California and, of course, . . . water from Mono Lake is about to . . . soon be cut

**off . . . So far as Northern California is concerned,
Miller . . . with the environmental movement . . .
will see that there will be less water taken for C-V-
P . . . These were battles that have been going on
for years and years. They will continue to go on. .
. . .”**

Monberg: Oh, it'll be the same thing. There won't be any difference. We don't learn a damn thing from history. The upper and lower basin will continue to fight over Colorado River water, and it'll be *exactly* the same thing. There will be no changes at all.

Southern California will continue to want water from the Sierra Nevadas, and it'll continue to want water from Northern California and, of course, the environmental movement in California is so sharp, that water from Mono Lake is about to cease ~~to~~, so far as the diversions are concerned, they will soon be cut off, so Southern California will not have that water.

So far as Northern California is concerned, Miller is [an] extremely effective congressman, and some way or other, with the environmental movement which is basically centered in the San Francisco area, they will see that there will be less water taken for C-V-P, and more will go into the Sacramento Bay, which has had major pollution problems, particularly in recent years. These were battles that have been going on for years and years. They will continue to go on.

What Beard is trying to do, and what Miller is trying to do, is make more efficient use of water. But that would come in time, whether they want it or not. This isn't a federal problem, this is a local problem. You have [only] so much water, how are you going to divvy it up? The water users themselves are getting very much into that.

I had done a story about—this was in *Wrap-Up* about three months ago, about two irrigation districts in California that were really working on water conservation. I got a call from Texas one day. These people wanted to know how the California districts were doing it. Gees, I was so busy, and I said, "Let me give you their addresses, because I don't have the phone numbers right at hand. Send them a copy of the *Wrap-Up*. Tell them that you need some information on how they went about it, and they'll have a lot of information for you." And so they went ahead and did it.

There will be a lot of trading back and forth on how to do it. There will continue to be efforts to clean the water through—or desalting and other pollution. The problem is, it is really costly, and research costs, you know, the research money is down. But again, this is the kind of thing that *if* the locals really want to do it, they don't need federal money for that. If they *really* want to do it, get themselves a pot, get themselves a really good researcher, the kind of guy that—say he was an engineer, but take a scientist of the

ability of a Bill Klostermeyer, and put him in charge of it, and they'll get some answers that they can use, you know, have research which is directed toward an end use. They can do it. You really can. You can do whatever you want to, providing, by God, you work like hell and you know what you want to do. But you can't screw around on it; you've got to move ahead. And the sharpest water managers will do that.

What Beard will do, he will provide a bully pulpit on that, and he will provide some grant money, but that is—have better use of your water locally, that basically is a local problem, and the guys are moving, not fast, but they're moving toward that.

“I don't see that the Bureau's going to have a lot of future in water conservation. They are not going to have the money to give out. It's just not going to be there. . . .”

I don't see that the Bureau's going to have a lot of future in water conservation. They are not going to have the money to give out. It's just not going to be there. (Storey: Uh-huh.) So I look to see more and more of the local people who *really* are interested in it, trying to work something out. They can do it if they want to do it. But I don't see water quantity problems as changing any. We'll just be fighting over the same battles that we fought years ago, and the urban areas are going to win, because they've got the votes,

it's as simple as that. Whether it makes sense or doesn't make sense is beside the point.

Of course, we all know that a lot of the—you know, what's the point in providing highly subsidized irrigation water to grow cotton in Arizona? It doesn't make any sense. Just plain doesn't make any sense. So you work it out so it isn't done anymore. Some of those things, it'll take time, but we'll get around to it. Then you'll be growing cotton in Louisiana where there's plenty of water and you don't have that problem, or someplace where they've got plenty of water.

Storey: You mentioned Secretary Babbitt earlier. What do you think of him?

Monberg: Terrific guy.

Storey: What about in relation to water resources in the West?

Issues Bruce Babbitt Has to Deal with as Secretary of the Interior

Monberg: Well, Babbitt has C-A-P on his back, and I simply don't know how that's going to work out. The water districts have said they're going to go bankrupt if the Bureau raises the price of water to the point where they feel they can't buy it. The farmers have already, for *many* years now, have continued to pump groundwater, which they weren't supposed to do. That's what C-A-P was for, to stop the

pumping, and they haven't done it. It's such a mess.

I think if he didn't have C-A-P on his back, he probably would be—I'm not sure about this. Babbitt wants to please. The Clinton administration gives away the store so fast. Somebody calls from the Hill, and so the Clinton administration says, "We won't go into that." The great thing about Babbitt is that he *knows*, at least, what the problem is. Whether he's able *to do anything* about that, or anything else, I think is very out for grabs. I *like* him very much. He is without a doubt the ablest secretary of interior that we've had in fifty years. He's an ex-governor, he's got political savvy, he's down to earth, he's got great connections, he's got *everything* going for him. But he hasn't been a very successful secretary of interior. And the reason he hasn't been, is that the problems are not water problems. God, water is the last of the problems that he has to worry about at this point. The problems are public land problems. Both the grazing fee and how you handle grazing lands, which are used by the ranchers, both—well, they're used in connection with the private lands. How you're going to handle that, and how you're going to handle the revision of the mining law is so much up in the air, and they don't *dare* do anything because they're concerned about losses in [mid-term congressional elections in] November, so they'll just continue to screw around, screw around, and do nothing. There will probably be something relative to mining

law. Well, I would be amazed if they did anything relative to grazing.

It's not that Babbitt doesn't know what to do, but he's caught between Clinton, who gives away the store too fast, and Miller, who is totally inflexible on these issues. And so he's boxed in. I don't think he's been an effective secretary of interior, and the environmentalists are very disappointed. I think they have reason to be disappointed, because, my God, this was a guy who went in as the man who was in charge of League of Conservation Voters. You can't point to a big environmental victory that either Babbitt or the Clinton administration's had in the last two years. There isn't a single one. Not one. Everybody thought that these people would really get somewhere.

Of course, a lot of the problem is due to the fact that people they brought in, Babbitt didn't have a right to select his own staff. He was able to select Reike because she was so *qualified*, that how could they not take her. She was the right party and so forth, and a Babbitt buddy. But by and large, he's had to take people that came over to him from the White House.

“Interior's known as a backwater agency, so they aren't getting the best to begin with . . .”

Interior's known as a backwater agency, so they aren't getting the best to begin with, and the people don't know—many of them don't

know what the hell they're doing. They're so hung up on spin-doctoring and a lot of stuff that has nothing to do with how you run a government, that it's made it very difficult for him.

“Babbitt is . . . a good soldier. . . . I feel real sorry for him, because I feel his talents are wasted, truly wasted. . . .”

Babbitt is, God, he's a good soldier. He won't bitch about it. You sit down and talk to him, and would he say anything like that against Clinton? Hell, no, because he's not supposed to. And, you know, we all know what the ball game's about. I feel real sorry for him, because I feel his talents are wasted, truly wasted.

Stephen Breyer

I'm not sure, I would have chosen the man who's just been chosen Supreme Court justice on the first go-around. I think the man clearly was the most able person in the world, among the group that were under consideration. [Stephen] Breyer is an extremely able guy. It turns out he has an Achilles heel, too, of course, with that Lloyd's of London problem.

“. . . Babbitt . . . I think he would have been a good Supreme Court justice. . . . he probably could get confirmed, but it would be such a bruising battle that it wasn't worth the battle. . . .”

But Babbitt, I don't know how he would—I personally think that judges ought to be judges. I'm not too sure that you ought to bring in people from private life. I think that the Supreme Court should take the best judges that you've got from your appellate courts, But I think he would have been a good Supreme Court justice.

Storey: Babbitt?

Monberg: Uh-huh.

Storey: Why do you think he wasn't asked?

Monberg: I think he wasn't asked because he couldn't get confirmed.

Storey: Because?

Monberg: Couldn't get confirmed—excuse me, he probably could get confirmed, but it would be such a bruising battle that it wasn't worth the battle. One of the things with Breyer is that he'd worked for the Senate Judiciary Committee. [Senator Orrin] Hatch liked him, who is an extremely important Republican on the committee, and so the stage was set.

Opposition to Bruce Babbitt and Interior Policies

With *Babbitt*, ranchers in Utah and everywhere else are up in arms. All you have to read is the people from the West each month, they're growing like leaps and bounds. Whether they should or not is something else

again, whether they have a lot of nutcakes in the crew, they obviously do, but, nevertheless, I mean people who just *hate* the federal government, *period*, whether it makes any sense or not. But nevertheless, these people are extremely able politically, and they know how to put their messages across, and they're very persistent. I think the Republicans from the mountain West, particularly, would have said, "No way, Jose." They would have filibustered it. I don't think they could have defeated it, but I think basically what it came down to is, he couldn't be confirmed without one hell of a battle.

Storey: [Tape recorder turned off.] Here was a brief interruption while Helene Monberg answered the telephone.

Moe Udall

Monberg: . . . for years, who has—he's Hispanic. That's what he was calling me about. He was calling me about a new student. He has been active in that People for the West thing, so, of course, he has a bias. But I've know him for years. He used to work for Moe Udall. He worked for Moe for years here. You know who Moe Udall was?

Storey: Yeah. Among other things, one of the secretaries of interior.

Monberg: Moe Udall? No.

Storey: No? Am I confusing him with his brother?

Monberg: You are.

Storey: Stewart, yeah.

Monberg: Moe Udall was a . . .

Storey: Congressman.

Monberg: . . .congressman here from Arizona for many years, who was the chairman of the interior committee until he had to quit about 1991, because he got Parkinson's Disease. Absolutely wonderful guy. Barbara Vellis [phonetic] worked for him.

Bruce Babbitt No Longer Has Support in Rural Arizona

I deliberately asked him, because you had asked me about Babbitt, how does he look, and he said relative to the rural areas and the small town areas in Arizona where he used to have a big following, he said, "It's gone." And that's my impression, too.

Storey: That's for Bruce Babbitt.

“ . . . Babbitt . . . was a very *popular* and very *effective* governor. It's just tough being secretary of interior in the Clinton administration. . . .”

Monberg: We're talking about Babbitt, who was a very *popular* and *very effective* governor. It's just tough being secretary of interior in the Clinton administration. There are just no two ways about it, because the things that you have to

do, if you are going to do what the administration thinks it wants to do, simply are not popular on the home front.

Storey: Well, unfortunately, I've kept you longer than I had planned, or you had planned. I'd like to ask you a couple of quick questions . . .

Monberg: Go ahead.

Storey: . . . because I do have another appointment.

Monberg: No, I understand.

Western Resources Warp-Up

Storey: *Western Resources Wrap-Up*. How many people subscribed to that.

Monberg: About 250.

Storey: And two hundred fifty people, or organizations, really?

Monberg: Yeah, people and organizations. They were both people and organizations. There were about 250 subscribers.

Storey: What did you see as the focus of *Western Resources Wrap-Up*?

Monberg: Western resources.

Storey: In their entirety?

Monberg: Sure.

- Storey: Public land, mining, water.
- Monberg: Sure. The whole thing.
- Storey: When you say “western,” what does that mean to you?
- Monberg: Western—the seventeen Western reclamation states. (Storey: Okay.) See, in other words, we were getting the Missouri River clear to the Pacific Ocean. I also had a subscriber in Alaska, too.
- Storey: Could you very quickly tell me about what you've done with the money you've made from your freelance work?
- Monberg: I never freelanced.
- Storey: From your news service, or your *news* bureau, I'm sorry.
- Monberg: You think of it as being freelancing. I wasn't freelancing. I'm not a freelancer. How much money I made from it?
- Storey: No, I don't want to know—I want to know about your scholarship program. Let me put it that way.

Scholarship Programs for Disadvantaged Kids

- Monberg: Well, you've got in there, in the material that I gave you, the background about where we are at the present time. Relative to the Payne Scholarship Program, which I started years

Bureau of Reclamation History Program

ago with Ethel Payne, where we helped disadvantaged kids here in Washington. Ethel Payne was a newswoman who worked for a black newspaper out of Chicago, my recollection, it was the *Chicago Defender*. We named the scholarship program in honor of her brother. We started out, and my recollection is is we had about fifty kids in that for several years, until she went back to Chicago, and in 1973—and that's what all these awards are about—in 1973, I started the Achievement Scholarship Program for kids who were on parole or probation. They were all ex-offenders.

END SIDE 1, TAPE 3. AUGUST 10, 1994.

BEGIN SIDE 2, TAPE 3. AUGUST 10, 1994.

They were the vast majority of the kids who were in the program. We had excellent spotters. We weren't just looking for grades, we were looking for kids who had a real chance to use education effectively, not just as a way to be out of prison, but really, really trying to make something of themselves. The parole and probation officers knew who those kids were, because they, again, tend to come back again and again. They were excellent people to deal with. They weren't going to give you a lot of "who struck John," because anybody who gives me "who struck John," is out the window. I'm not fooling with them. And we interviewed all the kids, and the scholarship seems to me, started in to be about 500 bucks back in—which you could go to school for a year at the University of District

Columbia, in 1993, for 500 bucks. We got it up to about . . .

Storey: 1973 or '93?

Monberg: 1973. We got it up to about \$1,200 when I turned the program over to Arch Training Center to keep it alive. It was right at the end of 1988. I had run it for seventeen years. We got the kids' completion rate higher than for the general population. I raised enough money in that program for 400 kids to be in school. Of course, with this new program, which will be—if I can keep the corpus at 600,000—I raised about 400,000 in maybe—in A-S-P. Of course, I put up money myself.

Storey: A-S-P?

Monberg: Achievement Scholarship Program. Then in this new program, there will be six kids a year at \$5,000 a year, two going to the University of Southern Colorado, freshmen. These are for freshmen only. Two going to the University of Southern Colorado, two going to the University of Colorado at Boulder, where I went to school, and two who are graduates of Lake County High School, where my dad and my sister and I graduated from what is now Lake County High School, was then Leadville High School, at home in Leadville. These are starter scholarships, and we hope to have the same kind of spotters, people who really know what kid is likely to make it.

We're not looking necessarily for the brightest; we're looking for kids who will be worthwhile to their community. I have absolutely no use for truly bright people who get an education and then go out and live in the suburbs and forget about the problems of the world, and golf on Saturday and do all the things which the upper-middle-class do, and forget about the rest of the world. As far as I am concerned, they are not worth my little toe. I mean it, sincerely. We could solve the problems in this country if everybody would get in and solve them. One of the reasons Clinton is having problems is that he has absolutely no credibility. But if he had credibility, has the willingness to *look* at things that should be done, and if he could get some support, he could be one hell of a president. But the suburban types who forget about all of the problems of the urban areas and just feed their faces, I have no use for them whatsoever. None.

Storey: Well, I'd like to go longer, but, unfortunately, I'm out of time.

Monberg: Well, this is it for this point. I don't have that kind of recollection. Later on when I get to the point where I have read over material and things will come to me, then I can let you know (Storey: Good.) if there is something that is really worthwhile. But my memory is—and which interested me relative to *Wrap-Up*—my memory loss made very little difference to me. It made difference on hyphenating words. I am not sure how a word is hyphenated. I'd

always have to look in the dictionary to be absolutely sure on a word that we don't use all the time, but that's about the only thing. And the reason was, I simply do not live in the past. Everything is today and future. I don't think we learn a damn thing from the past. Forget it. I'm not saying we shouldn't; I am saying, as a practical matter, we don't. So what difference does it make? This is awful to tell you, as historian for the Bureau of Rec, but I *really* don't think we do. If we did, why would we be going back and doing the same kind of *yakking* that we did fifty years ago, on "You're a bastard, you're a bastard," relative to who's going to get the water? For God's sake, I notice that on—I don't follow foreign policy at all, but I noticed—I guess I heard it on "McNeil-Lehrer," that the Israelis and whoever the hell they are dealing with now on trying to settle battles between the Israelis and the Arabs, whatever nation it is that they're currently dealing with, that they were talking about, among other things, *how* to share water, and they *absolutely* have to do it if they're going to have peace in the Middle East. But they're going to work out something so that it's going to be settled for here on out, because they're sick of fighting with each other. We aren't in the situation where it's that desperate. We may be at some point, but we aren't that desperate now, so we just keep going over the same old ground.

Storey: Well, is it acceptable for Reclamation and the National Archives to make the tapes and any resulting . . .

Monberg: Sure, do anything you want.

Storey: . . . transcripts available?

Monberg: Sure. Sure. Do anything you want to.

Storey: Okay.

Monberg: I am perfectly willing to have you use it ***any way*** you want to use it.

Storey: Thank you.

END SIDE 2, TAPE 2. AUGUST 10, 1994.
END OF INTERVIEW.

Appendices

1. Letter Helene Monberg to Brit Storey, April 20, 1994.

HELENE C. MONBERG, 123 SIXTH STREET, S. E., WASHINGTON, D.C. 20003, (202) 848-1380-1
 Editor and Publisher, Western Resources Wrap-up 4-20-94

Dear Brit, RE Living History

I have made some notes RE the living history session that you wanted to do with me. In doing so, my memory was jogged that Marce Goslin, the widow of Ival V. Goslin, who was the executive director of the Upper Colorado River Commission and a key player as a technical adviser and friend of Rep. Wayne M. Aspinall, D-Colo., called me last year. She said she had some papers of Ival's and wanted to know if I thought any organization would be interested in them. I believe I suggested Mesa College to her. You might want to get in touch with Marce and see if she still has them. Tell her I suggested that you should contact her. Her address is: Mrs. Ival V. (Marcelyn) Goslin
 2700 "G" Road #3A
 Grand Junction, CO 81506

If you decide to go outside of the Bu/Rec retiree circle, Marce is a possible candidate for a living history session too. Marce was Ival's second wife. He married her after his first wife died. Marce worked on Capitol Hill, as I recall, and that's where Ival met her. She is a great gal, always on the move. Loves to travel. She only saw the Upper Colorado bill take shape from the periphery, but she should have some great stories to tell RE the Ival-Aspinall combo.

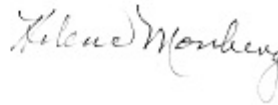
RE my living history session with you, you might want to rethink your offer. #1. I can't do it in any event before my sister comes here in mid-May. I'll have my time more than occupied between now and May 21, when she leaves. You planned to be here sooner than that. But I am no longer an Iron Woman, and I can't turn around on a dime any more. So the first session will have to be postponed. That would have to be only an overview, as so many of the activities that happened are no longer in my faulty memory bank. If there were to be others, they would have to wait until I have an opportunity to go thru some of my files prior to turning them over to the Bu/Rec, the Corps and our colleagues at home. And I won't be rushed on that. I have two family projects that I have to finish while my 97-year-old aunt, Ann Heath of Colorado Springs, is still around. With my sister Hank's coming next month, they are being pushed back too. As the donor, I won't be rushed on this. I'm aware how important history is, altho we don't learn a damned thing from it. Loved the subject in school.

#2. The top Bu/Rec crew here, including Beard, Osann and Counts, are so turned off on me that they didn't inform me of about their reorganization news conference last week. It's the first time that's ever happened in any agency that I cover since I started my news bureau in 1947. If Dan & Co. regard me as the enemy, you might not want to be in the middle. And I can always use my time on my work or other projects. Don't worry that the files will be jeopardized if I'm passed over. They won't, and that's what you are particularly interested in anyway.

73's,

CC: Dan Beard
 Historian Brit A. Storey
 Bur of Reclamation, DOI
 P.O. Box 80225
 Denver, Colo., 80225

Helene Monberg



2. Letter Daniel Beard to Helene Monberg, May 4, 1994.



Helene

5/4/94

I was very disturbed after reading your recent letter to Brit Storey. In ~~the~~ letter, you said the "Bo/Rec crew here, including Beard" are so "turned off on me that they didn't inform me about their reorganization news conference." Not so!

First of all, I don't handle invitations to press conferences; my public affairs shop does. As you'll recall, you've refused to deal with them because Lisa is from New Jersey and, according to your characterization, a "political hack." As I told you when I hired ^{COMMISSIONER} her, she was my ^{BUREAU OF RECLAMATION}

choice, not the White House. In addition, I have nothing but the highest respect for your professional abilities and your personal achievements. I'm not "turned off" on you at all. I would suggest that you call me on occasion (since you won't talk to my staff). There are lots of things going on - exciting things! After many years of sliding down hill, the Bureau is now moving again. I'm in China and Bulgaria ~~for~~ through May so I give me a call sometime after that. Best wishes
RHR

3. Letter Helene Monberg to Daniel Beard, June 2, 1994.

HELENE C. MONBERG, 123 SIXTH STREET, S. E., WASHINGTON, D.C. 20003, (202) 566-1350-1
 Editor and Publisher, Western Resources Wrap-up 6-2-94

Dear Dan,

Thank you for the two recent Bu/Rec unsolicited subscriptions to WRW. WRW sells itself these days.

Please excuse the delay in responding to your note of May 4. You and Brit Storey need not worry about Bu/Rec getting some of my old files, along with the Corps and our colleges at home in Colorado. I made that commitment years ago. It has nothing to do with my current relations with Bu/Rec. However, I can't be pushed, pulled, tugged or driven on this project. It has to be well down on my list of priorities if I am to keep my show on the road.

If you are concerned about the likelihood of my being disabled or dying before the files are distributed, forget it. I have an agreement with Marty Reuss, the Corps historian here, that he will see the info is distributed. We'll put our handshake agreement in writing as soon as Marty returns from an extended absence from his office.

RE the two-hour oral or living history that Brit has asked me to do, I have to find time to get my thoughts together, and I can't do so now.

My sister Hank visited me last month from Western Montana, and my cousin Ann Elrod of Colorado Springs will be here soon. Ann is chairman of our new scholarship selection committee. Thru a sickening set of events my safety net has torn in three places recently, highlighted by the death of Dr. Robert Choisser, my long-time "family" doctor. Because I was unable to get over to see the partners in his medical office because of Hank's visit, they closed the books two weeks ago on taking more of the Choisser patients. So I have to find a new doctor--fast. The doctors on Capitol Hill don't have x-ray equipment...at a time when my right knee and right leg are bothering me tremendously. Right now, it's a very rough time for me. IRS is being picky about the application that we filed for our scholarship tax exemption at a time when we are pushing it to act. Ann Elrod's Committee will make the selection of our first awardee about July 15, and the youth will be welcomed into our family early in August at a cookout at my cousins' Jack and Sue Bennett's ranch at Parker, Colo. (Enclosed is a page that explains the program.)

All of this is happening when I have lost the tremendous energy level that I used to have. I'm beat all of the time. I continue my work because each additional month I work adds another \$1500-\$1800 in monthly Merrill Lynch interest to my scholarship program. WRW is a respectable news operation. I will only sell WRW to bona fide press/gallery accredited news operations. The two that have looked it over concluded they weren't interested because of what they regard as its low profit margin. Lobbyists and PRO's would be delighted to get their hands on it. I'd discontinue publishing WRW first; they will never get their hands on WRW.

.....

RE the Bu/Rec thru you and others being turned off on me, that is true. When I was talking to you by phone early this year a long distance call came in that I was expecting with short but vital info that I needed, as I was chasing a deadline, as usual. I asked you to let me call you back. You said you would call me back. You didn't. That was the last time that you have spoken to me. I tried later a half dozen times to get you by phone but Brenda said you were unavailable. So I gave up.

RE your PR set-up, you are correct. I regard Lisa Counts of New Jersey as a political operative --not a "hack", as you put it in your note--because she is too young to be a hack and the Clinton political types are generally pretty able. You made my point for me better than I could. Neither you nor she knows anything about the press. Her operation has one purpose: to make you look dumb.

-2-

Neither of you knows that when you call a press conference, you naturally, as a matter of course, automatically notify the press types that have covered the Bu/Reo. It is accepted tradition because it makes sense. To fail to do so is an absolute no-no. (My views in this regard have been best expressed by Agriculture Secretary Mike Espy. When he was named Secretary of Agriculture, he wanted to dump a raft of USDA flaks. He asked why taxpayers should pay for PRO's trying to make each agency look good in the press? If we are any good, he said, our performance will speak for us. If not, all of the flaks in the world won't make any difference. If you let the news flow naturally, and if you have any common sense (as you do), you will come out ahead in the long run without any cost to the taxpayers. I'm fed to the teeth with PRO's that are supposed to be press aides but are spin doctors. I hate the damned system. You have been in this town for a quarter century, and you know what I am talking about. You might not admit it, but that small voice of conscience will tell you this difficult gal from Leadville has a point.

It's a moral issue with me. I feel our democracy is undermined and tarnished by spin doctors. The truth is so wonderful that it is beautiful even when it's ugly because YOU CAN COUNT ON IT.

Once I get my safety net put back together, and can get a capable doctor look at my bum knee and leg, I'll take up your offer to call you from time to time. All you have to do is pass the word to Bu/Reo program people to talk to me. (Ed Osann is a lost cause.) As a veteran news type, I rarely, if ever, learn anything from the flaks because they tell you what they want to tell you rather than what you need to know, and the program people are far superior because many of them understand problems in depth. No PRO does.

If you are worried about whether I like you or Brit, forget it. I like both of you---particularly you--and I am especially impressed with Secretary Babbitt. He is the ablest man to be Secretary of Interior in my time since Harold Ickes. He has had a lot of bad breaks, and he has been pursued by right-wing nutcases.

When I can see my way clear, I'll call Brit RE the two-hour oral history. I doubt I'll be able to do more because of my memory loss, and it would take so much study of my files to bring back the many delicious events that I saw happen. But I promised him one, and I'll go thru with that promise later.

73's.

Helene

P.S. I hate computers. To get this letter written, I deliberately used my IBM typewriter. It's easier for me to use. And I have to watch my time very, very carefully because of my low energy level. MCM

4. Letter Helene Monberg to Brit Storey, August 11, 1994.

HELENE C. MONBERG, 123 SIXTH STREET, S.E., WASHINGTON, D.C. 20003, (202) 546-1250-1

Editor and Publisher, Western Resources Wrap-up

8-11-94

Dear Brit,

Thank you for coming yesterday. I had just about worked down thru backlogged chores to yours. When you called, I put you ahead of the second family history for the Leadville Historical Society. I am trying to get as much backlogged work finished as possible, so that if a job comes up that I can handle in writing/research, I'll be ready to take it. Thanks also for mailing the letter and for replacing a light bulb for me.

Sorry that my memory is so poor on the past Reclamation Commissioners. I think there are many others who will fail to recall most of them. There have been two outstanding Commissioners in my time: Floyd Doniny and Dan Beard. The Bu/Rec achieved its maximum effectiveness during Doniny's tenure and Beard changed it permanently.

RE your concern about further tapings, no point in talking if I can't recall events that you are interested in. That's why I'll never write a book. I make no effort to remember yesterday, even tho some of those yesterday were fascinating. And I doubt I could recall events in such a way that they would be in focus with the overall picture. I'll let you know if and when I do. I'm a self-starter. Don't remind me. My memory RE obligations is fine.

RE you and Marty helping me with backlogged material. No way. You are both good guys. If you had no government connection, we could work something out. But as the government would be involved, this means red tape, as I immediately discovered RE Marty's promise to help me. I avoid government red tape like a plague. And I'll go at my own pace, depending on when I decide to leave Washington and the salability of my house. Believe me, going thru old material is not a high priority for me. I'll do it as I have the time and feel like it. I regard it as a citizen duty that I'm not wild about.

Your questions were excellent, tho for the sophisticated, very narrow audience involved, I was surprised about your asking for basic definitions like diversions. Imagine having to define diversions to WRN readers! They know in spades, and all of the subtleties...

RE your use of the word freelancer. In the news business, a f/l sells stories to any publication that will buy them, with no basic obligation to one or a set of publications. It's a story here, a story there. Freelancing is a great way to go broke. I never free-lanced. My relationships with all of the publications that I worked for were long-time and stable. While they had a need, I served it. When that need ended, I went on to other publications. Or when the direction of my work changed, as when I decided to devote my work entirely to my papers in the West and left CQ in 1964, and when I decided to close my news bureau and devote my energies solely to WRN and left the Pueblo papers in 1983. I was the Washington correspondent for the Pueblo papers from 1947-1983--36 years. And I worked for CQ on a part-time basis from 1949-64--15 years.

Tell all I know hi, and tip your hat for me to our wonderful mountains at home.

Thanks.

73's,

Mr. Brit A. Storey, Historian
Bureau of Reclamation
Denver Federal Center
P.O. Box 25007
Denver, Colorado 80225-0007

Helene Monberg

CC: Marty Reuss, Corps

Oral history of Helene C. Monberg

5. Page from *Western Resources Wrap-Up* Announcing creation of the Luther and Helene Denzler Monberg Memorial Achievement Scholarship Program in Colorado.

Page 5 WRW washn x x x plan

The 1872 mining law has never been significantly changed, as such. Under it federal land is open to location for mining gold, silver, copper and other hardrock minerals without making any payments to Uncle Sam for royalties. One of the top priorities of the Clinton Administration at its inception and of the environmental community to date has been to revise the law substantially or to repeal it. The hardrock mining industry and GOP Senators from the Mountain West where mining is important to the economy in mineralized areas have successfully fought off all attempts to amend the law for years. The biggest strike against it is the patent provision, for under which the federal government sells public land to miners (and others) for \$2.50-\$5 an acre depending on the type of claim. Sen. Dianne Feinstein, D-Calif., proved when the Senate passed the California desert bill on April 13 that if Democrats in the Senate can be brought into the fold, controversial environmental/natural resources legislation can pass the Senate. That's Johnston's thrust in attempting mining law revision. Both Johnston and Miller want assurances from the White House that it will not "pull the rug out from under them" prior to final Congressional action on a bill, an aide told WRW.

NEW SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM UNDERWAY IN COLORADO WRW-5-5-94

Washington--The Luther and Helene Denzler Monberg Memorial Achievement Scholarship Program (ASP) in honor and in memory of my parents got underway in May 1. Initially it will provide one \$1,000 "seed-money" scholarship annually to a bright, financially needy youth during his/her freshman year at college in my home state of Colorado. The first Monberg ASP awardee will be selected within the next six weeks. He/she will be a freshman in the fall term 1994 at the University of Southern Colorado at Pueblo. Next year the bright needy awardee will come from the ranks of freshmen attending the University of Colorado at Boulder, my alma mater and that of my mother and three generations in my family. The third year the needy bright awardee will be a graduating senior from Lake County High School (LCBS) in Leadville. My father, my sister and I graduated from Leadville High School, the predecessor of LCBS in Leadville, my hometown. Like the other two scholarship programs that I have originated and run here, this will be a spare barebones, all-volunteer operation, with all contributions going directly to fund scholarships. This one is for straight arrows like my parents. It will be run by five young cousins of mine, all graduates of Colorado colleges living in Colorado, and by my young grandniece, a 1994 graduate of Williams College in Massachusetts. Unlike my earlier scholarship programs, we will not seek contributions from the public in the Monberg ASP, as it is a family-operated Foundation. Some of you have already given me money for the new program, and it has been returned to you pending the approval by IRS of our application for federal tax-exempt status. IRS approval is expected directly. If you care to give, that will be the time to do so. We decided to launch the program now to have an awardee in college fall term. We already have the green light to go ahead from the state of Colorado, and the University of Southern Colorado Foundation has federal tax-exempt status. The first awardee, and all who follow, will have an adult mentor and will be welcomed into the fold at a cook-out at the ranch of my cousins Jack and Sue Bennett at Parker, Colo., in mid-summer. We are living proof that a family made up of ordinary individuals can do extraordinary things. My will provides for six \$5,000 starter scholarships annually in perpetuity under the Luther and Helene Denzler Monberg Memorial ASP. -ECM-WRW-30-